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The Form of Perfect Living

and

other Prose Treatises.

The Form of Perfect Living

and

other Prose Treatises.

BY

RICHARD ROLLE,

OF HAMPOLE,

A.D. 1300–1349.

RENDERED INTO MODERN ENGLISH

BY

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"Love is a life, joining together the loving and the loved."

"Truth may be without love, but it cannot help without it."

RICHARD ROLLE

(*The Form of Perfect Living*, ch. x.).

Preface.

THIS book is not intended for those who are acquainted with Anglo-Saxon and Middle English; but for those who care for the thought, specially the religious and devotional thought, of our forefathers. My one aim has been to make a portion of that thought accurately intelligible to modern readers, with the greatest possible saving of trouble to them. When I could use the old word or phrase, with certainty of its being understood, I have done so. When I could not, I have replaced it with the best modern equivalent I could find or invent. In extenuation of the occasional use of Rolle's

expression, "by their lone," I may urge its expressiveness, the absence of an equivalent, and the fact that it may still be heard in remote places. Where possible, I have retained the archaic order of the original Text. Such irregular constructions, as *e.g.*, the use of a singular pronoun in the first half of a sentence, and of a plural in the second half, I have left unaltered; for the meaning was perfectly clear. In short, I have endeavoured to make Richard Rolle as he was as significant as possible to English men and women of to-day as they are, when they are not professed students of English language. In such an undertaking, it is obvious that I must have presented endless vulnerable places to the learned. I can only repeat that the book was never meant for them, but for those who will perhaps forgive me if I describe them

as specialists in religious thought rather than in English Language.

The rendering is made from the texts printed by Professor Horstman in his *Library of Early English Writers: Richard Rolle of Hampole an English Father of the Church.*

GERALDINE E. HODGSON.

The University, Bristol,
S. Mary Magdalene, 1910.

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Introduction.

RICHARD ROLLE of Hampole is the earliest in time of our famous English Mystics. Born in or about 1300, he died in 1349, seven years after Mother Julian of Norwich was born. Walter Hilton died in 1392.

An exhaustive account of Rolle's life is given in Vol. ii. of Professor Horstman's Edition of his works, a book unfortunately out of print. The main facts are recorded in a brief "Life" appended to Fr. R. Hugh Benson's *A Book of the Love of* JESUS. Therefore, it will suffice to say here that Richard Rolle seems to have been born at Thornton, near Pickering, in Yorkshire, in or about

1300 ; that, finding the atmosphere of Oxford University uncongenial, he left it, and for some four years was supported, as a hermit, by the Dalton Family. By the end of that time, through prayer, contemplation and self-denial, he had attained the three stages of mystical life which he describes as *calor, dulcor, canor* ; (heat, sweetness, melody.) The next period of his life was less easy. Having left the protection of the Daltons, and being without those means of subsistence which are within the reach of priest or monk, this hermit depended for his daily bread on other men's kindness. Not that he was a useless person : apart from the utility of a life of Prayer, he could point to counsel and exhortation given ; to the existence of converts consequent upon his ministrations. To add to his difficulties, he preached a doctrine of high pure selflessness with which, the average man, in all times,

seems to have no abundant sympathy : and to crown all he was endowed by nature with a sensitive temper. His remarkable gifts forced him into public notice ; his cast of thought and his temperament were not calculated to win him ease or popularity. Professor Horstman is peculiarly severe to those among his enemies and detractors "who called themselves followers and disciples of Christ." The insertion here of this painful passage would introduce a jarring note ; moreover, the raked embers of past controversy seldom tend to the spiritual improvement of the present. An interesting judgment by Professor Horstman on Rolle's place in mysticism is too long for quotation ; but the following sentence may be taken as the pith of it :—"His position as a mystic was mainly the result of the development of scholasticism. The exuberant luxuriant growth of the brain in the system of Scotus

called forth the reaction of the heart, and this reaction is embodied in Richard Rolle, who as exclusively represents the side of feeling as Scotus that of reason and logical consequence; either lacking the corrective of the other element."

It is consoling to know that Rolle's last years were passed in peace, in a cell, near a monastery of Cistercian nuns at Hampole, where the nuns supported him, while he acted as their spiritual adviser.

In the book mentioned above, Fr. Hugh Benson has translated some of Richard Rolle's Poems, and certain devotional Meditations. In this Volume, four of his Prose Treatises have been selected from the rest of his works, in the belief that they may supplement those parts of Rolle's writings with which, those who are interested in these phases of thought, are already familiar.

The first, *The Form of Perfect Living*, is

a Rule of Life which he wrote for a nun of Anderby, Margaret Kirkby, of whom Professor Horstman writes: "She seems to have been his good angel, and perhaps helped to smooth down his ruffled spirits. This friendship was lasting—it lasted to their lives' ends."

This treatise was written of course to meet the requirements of the "religious" life. It has seemed expedient, because supplementary, then, to put next to it his work on *Our Daily Life*, which was meant for those who are "in the world"; and which may give pause to some who might otherwise criticise the first hastily, perhaps condemning it as unpractical, or even objectionable in a world where, after all, men must eat and drink and live, and where some, therefore must provide the necessary means. Most intensely practical is this second treatise, and perhaps nowhere more so than when it

meets the needs of those who are inclined to split straws over the definition of the word "good." What *is* a good action?—such people love to inquire, and like "jesting Pilate," sometimes do not "stay for an answer." Richard Rolle has no manner of doubt about his reply. An action must be good in itself, *i.e.*, so he would tell us, pleasing to God in its own nature. But the matter by no means ends there for him. This good action must be performed,—and it is this which is, now palpably, now subtly, hard—*entirely* for the sake of goodness, without the slightest taint of self-seeking, of vanity, of secret satisfaction that we are not as other men are, not even as this Pharisee or this Publican.

Such a motive, inspiring each person's whole work, would surely go far to remove what is known as the Social Problem. It would make many a house the dwelling of

peace, many a business-place an abode of honour. If we could get back to Richard Rolle's simplicity and to his unmovable faith, then, his goal, even the acquisition of perfect love, might seem to all of us less distressingly remote.

The present rendering has been taken from the longer and more elaborate of the two MSS. containing the Treatise. The shorter form of his work *On Grace* and *the Epistle* have been added in the hope that they may meet the need of all, contemplative or active as they may chance to be.

There is, among his voluminous writings, a curious and interesting *Revelation concerning Purgatory*, purporting to be a woman's dream about one, Margaret, a soul in Purgatory. Amidst much natural horror, not however exceeding that described by Dante, there are many quaint side-lights thrown upon our forefathers' ways of thought ;

as *e.g.*, when Margaret's soul is weighed in one scale, against the fiend, "and a great long worm with him," in the other; the worm of conscience, in fact. But the work has not been included in this volume, lest it should prove wholly unprofitable to a generation which if it be not readily disturbed by sin, is easily and quickly shocked by crude suggestions concerning its possible consequences and reward. They will find enough, perhaps, in the treatise *on Daily Work*.

If any one should think that there, and in one portion of the treatise *on Grace*, Rolle has dwelt harshly on considerations of fear, rather than on those of love, he must not make the mistake of concluding that these admonitions represent the whole of Catholic teaching on the point. Men's temperaments differ, and teachers, meeting these various tempers, differ in their modes of helping them. Side by side with Richard Rolle may

be put the words of S. Francis Xavier, in what is perhaps the most beautiful of Christian hymns :—

My God, I love Thee ; not because
I hope for heaven thereby,
Nor yet because who love Thee not
Are lost eternally.

. . . . . .

Not for the hope of gaining aught,
Not seeking a reward ;
But as Thyself hast lovèd me,
O ever-loving Lord !

Moreover, no reader of the Epistle *on Charity* can entertain any doubt as to whether our English Mystic understood the mystery of limitless love.

It is no doubt, easy to complain, as we read certain passages, that Richard Rolle's recommendations are neither new nor original : but if instead of dismissing them as familiar, we tried to put them into practice, we should perhaps have less leisure for idle

criticism of others, and ourselves be less evil and tiresome people.

On the other hand, the accusation may be brought that he proposes an impossibly high aim. No doubt, in such a pitch of devotion as is suggested, *e.g.*, in ch. viii. of *The Form of Perfect Living*, some may think they find extravagance: but no doubt it was this same spirit which inspired SS. Peter and Paul, and the other Apostles; which built up the Early Church; which made Saints, Martyrs and Confessors; which suggested such apparently forlorn hopes as that of S. Augustine of Canterbury, when, to bring them the Gospel of Jesus Christ, he bearded the rough Men of Kent, and (according to Robert of Brunne) reaped, as his immediate reward, a string of fishtails hung on his habit, though later, the conversion of these sturdy pagans. It was doubtless, too, the spirit which inspired the best men

and women in the English Church, before they began to confuse the spheres of Faith and Reason, and to disregard S. Hilary's warning about the difficulty of expressing in human language that which is truly "incomprehensible,"—incomprehensible in the old sense, as in the Athanasian Symbol, "Immensus Pater, immensus Filius, immensus Spiritus sanctus"; till, indeed, men forgot, for all practical purposes that infinity transcends the grasp of finite minds (in fact, as well as in placidly accepted and then immediately neglected theory); and can be apprehended only, and that imperfectly, by the best aspirations of a heart, set of fixed purpose on that high goal.

To the modern Englishman, immersed in business anxieties, imperial interests and domestic cares, the invitation repeated so often by Richard Rolle, to love God supremely, may seem incalculably unreal and

remote, even though he might hesitate to confess it baldly. But what if the Englishman who so loved God, were also the greater Englishman? And what answer does history return to that plain question?

"Richard Rolle," Professor Horstman does not hesitate to write "was one of the most remarkable men of his time, yea, of history. It is a strange and not very creditable fact that one of the greatest of Englishmen has hitherto been doomed to oblivion. In other cases, the human beast first crucifies, and then glorifies or deifies the nobler minds, who swayed by the Spirit, do not live as others live, in quest of higher ideals by which to benefit the race; he, one of the noblest champions of humanity, a hero, a saint, a martyr in this cause has never had his resurrection yet—a forgotten brave. And yet, he has rendered greater service to his country, and to the world at large, than all

the great names of his time. He rediscovered Love, the principle of Christ. He reinstalled feeling, the spring of life which had been obliterated in the reign of scholasticism. He re-opened the inner eye of man, teaching contemplation in solitude, an unworldly life in abnegation, in chastity, in charity . . . He broke the hard crust that had gathered round the heart of Christianity, by formalism and exteriority, and restored the free flow of spiritual life."

This passage, to those who feel that there has been no age since the Birth of Christ when the great principles of religious life have been wholly lost, and who remember that Richard Rolle lived in the age of Dante, may seem overstated. But it shews sufficiently at least, and for that reason is quoted here, what a great Englishman he was, and what a debt his unaware countrymen owe him; a debt which they could pay in the way most

grateful to him, by listening to his words.

It may be remarked, by the way, that Rolle is not inclined to substitute individualism for the authority of the Church; a change which has been brought against some mystics. There is immense emphasis laid, all through his writings, on the importance of conduct. The penetrating analysis, in ch. vi, of *The Form of Perfect Living*, of the possible sins humanity can commit on its journey through the wilderness of this world, hardly leaves a corner of the heart unlighted; lets not one possible shift, twist or excuse of the human conscience go free. But it all has the Church as its immediate background; the Mystical *Body*, not the individual soul in isolation, is everywhere taken for granted. Man lives not to himself nor dies to himself, even though he be Richard Rolle the hermit, or Margaret Kirkby the recluse, that is the plain teaching of these

plain-speaking pages. And all through them too is a tough common sense, and an unusually alert power of observation; and there is perhaps an element of that business capacity, which some of the Saints and Mystics have shewn, in his inclusion among "sins of deed" of "beginning a thing that is above our might"; for in that there is not only pride, but a kind of stupid incapacity surely.

It is quite possible that Rolle's tendency to repetition may tire any one who reads him "straight on," as the phrase is. But it is doubtful whether that be the best means of approach. If he be read in bits, he will prove far more effective: and his ability to hit the right nail on the head, and to hit it wonderfully hard, may occasionally bring his words home to our immediate circumstances with an appositeness that may be more than a coincidence.

In the past, the learned and ignorant

alike have been guilty of the operation which may be described as cutting man up into parts: *i.e.*, they have been inclined to treat him now as if he were all intellect, then as if he were all feeling; while to the will a kind of intermediate part has generally been allotted, as if it were the handmaid instead of the master of the other two. And there is still, in some quarters, a tendency to relegate the will and the feelings to an inferior plane, if indeed they be allowed any place at all. In other quarters, the onslaught is made on intellect. Men are bidden to be humble, to become as little children; as if there were any humility in thinking incorrectly or not at all; as if the odd, though suppressed, assumption that children have no intellects had any ground in fact. It is surely a true apostrophe—

> "God! Thou art mind! Unto the master-mind,
> Mind should be precious."

The Angelic Doctor himself paid a tribute to the importance and special difficulties of intellect, and also to the necessity of uniting it with will :—" the martyrs had greater merit in faith, not receding from the faith for persecutions ; and likewise men of learning have greater merit of faith, not* receding from the faith for the reasons of philosophers or heretics alleged against it." Richard Rolle, following on the same lines as S. Thomas Aquinas, has nothing of this spirit of division : the whole being is what he would fain see offered to GOD, whether it be so by Margaret Kirkby, or by those who are " in the world," for whom *Our Daily Work* was written. In the image of GOD was man made, and therefore GOD suffices for all the needs of man's nature : that, at least seems to be the underlying idea when Rolle writes :—" GOD is light and burning. Light

* Quoted by Fr. Joseph Rickaby, S.J., in *Scholasticism*, p. 121.

clarifies our reason, burning kindles our will." May we not say here too ?—" What God has joined together, that let not man put asunder."

Above all things, Rolle aims at a perfect balance, culminating in a harmony ruled by one power, and that the greatest in the world, Love. Real love, he asks ; not the degraded things to which men give that great name, as to every passing gust of feeling, to every unworthy untamed emotion : but the divine quality, when to the " lastingness," which he requires, is also joined that which is the inner essence of Love, viz., sacrifice. " Love is a life," he writes, " joining together the loving and the loved." And then he remembers the other great gift to men, intellectual sincerity, which has inspired all " who follow Truth along her star-paved way " ; and he gives to that its place and due : " Truth may be without love :

but it cannot help without it." Even then, the whole tale is not complete; the way of the Saints is not "Primrosed and hung with shade." Love, with Rolle, is no easy sentimentality: it involves definite sacrifice in more directions than one; it demands thought, perseverance, supernatural strength, natural strenuousness; it is not a selfish enjoyment of a circumambient atmosphere wrapping humanity, without responsibility or effort of its own: "Love is a *Life*."

"Love," he writes, "is a perfection of learning; virtue of prophecy; fruit of truth; help of sacraments; establishing of wit and knowledge; riches of pure men: life of dying men. So, how good love is. If we suffer to be slain; if we give all that we have (down) to a beggar's staff: if we know as much as men may know on earth, all this is naught but ordained sorrow and torment." Then, with that sound sense, which is not

the least element in the sum of his attractiveness, he utters a subtle warning against that all too common sin, judging one another: "If thou wilt ask how good is he or she, ask how much he or she loves: and that no man can tell. For I hold it folly to judge a man's heart, that none knows save GOD."

After this it cannot be necessary to say that Rolle is a true mystic. "Many," so he tells us in this same chapter x., "Many speak and do good, and love not GOD." But that will not suffice his exacting demands. A man is not "good" until his interior disposition be all filled and taken up with pure love of GOD. And as he analyses the Christian Character, there is a pleasant blunt directness about this holy man:—"he that says he loves GOD and will not do what is in him to shew love, tell him that he lies."

It is possible that the alarming list of sins of the heart, in chapter vi., may give the

heedless and even the heedful matter for grave thought, as each one finds himself ejaculating with spontaneous fear—"Who can tell how oft he offendeth? Cleanse thou me from my secret faults."

Surely no one need fear that the outcome of a study of Richard Rolle will be effeminacy. Not that that indeed is the special temptation of the English: a chill commonplace acquiescence in a convenient, if baseless, hope that somehow "things will come all right," is far more likely to lead them astray than any "burning yearning to God with a wonderful delight and certainty." Is not George Herbert's cry apposite still?

"O England, full of sin, but most of sloth!"

Nor can any one argue fairly that this absorption of the mystic is just selfish idleness. It is, so it seems, as we read Rolle's injunctions, of the nature of hard exacting toil. No doubt, there must be those who do

the material work of the world; who gain, among other things, those "goods" which go to support the Mystics. But there will be no lack of such workers, through the inroads of religion; the broad ways of daily life are in no danger of contracting suddenly in to the path to the strait gate. Moreover, natural life itself is a poor thing unsupported by an unseen stream of spiritual refection. Here, as elsewhere in the ordered economy of things, two forms of life are found to be complementary. It is true, as Dr. Bigg once wrote:—"If Society is to be permeated by religion, there must be reservoirs of religion like those great storage places up among the hills which feed the pipes by which water is carried to every home in the city. We shall need a special class of students of God, men and women whose primary and absorbing interest it is to work out the spiritual life in all its purity and integrity."* It is indeed

* *Wayside Sketches*, p. 135.

the idlest of criticism that condemns such people as slothful or selfish.

There is one charm in our own Mystics which we may miss in S. John of the Cross or S. Teresa for example; viz., that with all their zeal, there is also an amazing reality and simplicity down at the bottom of it, which may seem to us not present in the rhapsodies of more southern lovers; though in all probability such seeming is purely racial. Nevertheless, we may be thankful if we find the antidote to our national prosaic ways in the sane zeal of others of our nation.

Lastly, as men read, they may be overcome perhaps by despair. This pure untainted selflessness of which Richard Rolle writes almost glibly, how can it be possible here and now? How can men and women, fixed in and condemned to the dusty ways of common life, unable as they are to leave the world even if they would, how can they so much

as dream of such unattainable heights? Is there no help for them in the often quoted lines of a later English Mystic?—

"Who aimeth at the sky
Shoots higher much than he who means a tree."

For plain men and women, the key to the problem may lie in the question put by Robert Browning into the mouth of Innocent XII.:—

"Is this our ultimate stage, or starting place
To try man's foot, if it will creep or climb,
'Mid obstacles in seeming, points that prove
Advantage for who vaults from low to high,
And makes the stumbling-block a stepping-stone?"

Even though the goal be not reached, to have willed deliberately here the first step may prove to have been not wholly unavailing.

The Form of Perfect Living.

The Form of Perfect Living

by

Richard Rolle.

CHAPTER I.

IN every sinful man and woman that is bound in deadly sin, are three wretchednesses, the which bring them to the death of hell. The first is : *Default of ghostly strength.* That they are so weak within their heart, that they can neither stand against the temptations of the fiend, nor can they lift their will to yearn for the love of GOD and follow thereto. The second is : *Use of fleshly desires :*—for they have no will nor might to stand, they fall into lusts and likings of this world ; and because they think them sweet, they dwell in them still, many till their

lives' end, and so they come to the third wretchedness. The third is, *Exchanging a lasting good for a passing delight*: as who say they give endless joy for a little joy of this life. If they will turn them and rise to penance, God will ordain their dwelling with angels and with holy men. But because they choose the vile sin of this world, and have more delight in the filth of their flesh than in the fairness of heaven, they lose both the world and heaven. For he that hath not Jesus Christ loses all that he hath, and all that he is, and all that he might get. For he is not worthy of life, nor to be fed with swine's-meat. All creatures shall be stirred in His vengeance in the day of Doom. These wretchednesses that I have told you of are not only in worldly men and women, who use gluttony, lust, and other open sins: but they are also in others who seem in penance and godly life. For the devil that is enemy

to all mankind, when he sees a man or a woman among a thousand, turn wholly to God, and forsake all the vanities and riches that men who love this world covet, and seek lasting joy, a thousand wiles he has in what manner he may destroy them. And when he can not bring them into such sins which might make all men wonder at them who knew them, he beguiles many so privily that they cannot oftentimes feel the trap that has taken them.

Some he takes with *error* that he puts them in. Some with *singular wit*, when he makes them suppose that the thing that they say or do is best; and therefore they will have no counsel of another who is better and abler than they; and this is a foul stinking pride; for such man would set his wit before all other. Some, the devil deceives through *Vain-glory*, that is idle joy; when any have pride and delight in themselves, of the

penance that they suffer, of good deeds that they do, of any virtue that they have; are glad when men praise them, sorry when men blame them, have envy of them who are spoken better of than they. They consider themselves so glorious, and so far surpassing the life that other men lead, that they think that none should reprehend them in anything that they do or say; and despise sinful men, and others who will not do as they bid them. How mayst thou find a sinfuller wretch than such a one? And so much the worse is he because he knows not that he is evil, and is considered and honoured of men as wise and holy. Some are deceived by *over-great lust and liking in meat and drink*, when they pass measure and come into excess, and have delight therein; and they know not that they sin, and therefore they amend them not, and so they destroy virtues of soul. Some are destroyed with *over-great abstinence* of

meat and drink and sleep. That is often temptation of the devil, for to make them fall in the midst of their work, so that they bring it to no ending as they should have done, had they known reason and had discretion; and so they lose their merit for their frowardness. This snare our enemy lays to take us with when we begin to hate wickedness, and turn us to GOD. Then many begin a thing that they can never more bring to an end: then they suppose that they can do whatsoever their heart is set on. But oftentimes they fall or ever they come midway; and that thing which they supposed was for them is hindering to them. For we have a long way to heaven, and as many good deeds as we do, as many prayers as we make, and as many good thoughts as we think in truth and hope and charity, so many paces go we heavenwards. Then, if we make us so weak and so feeble that we

can neither work nor pray as we should do, nor think, are we not greatly to blame that fail when we had most need to be stalwart? And well I wot that it is not GOD'S will that we so do. For the prophet says: "Lord, I shall keep my strength to Thee," so that he might sustain GOD'S service till his death-day, and not in a little and a short time waste it, and then lie wailing and groaning by the wall. And it is much more peril than men suppose. For S. Jerome says that he makes an offering of robbery who outrageously torments his body by over-little meat or sleep. And S. Bernard says: "Fasting and waking hinder not spiritual goods, but help, if they be done with *discretion*; without that, they are vices." Wherefore, it is not good to torture ourselves so much, and afterwards to have displeasure at our deed. There have been many, and are who suppose it is naught all that they do unless

they be in so great abstinence and fasting that all men speak of them who know them. But oftentimes it befalls that the more outward joy or wondering they have (on account) of the praising of men, the less joy they have within of the love of GOD. By my judgment, they should please JESUS Christ much more if they accepted for His sake—in thanking and praising Him, to sustain their body in His service and to withhold themselves from great speech of men—whatsoever GOD sent them in time and place, and gave themselves since entirely to the love and the praising of that Lord JESUS Christ: Who will stalwartly be loved, and lastingly be served, so that their holiness were more seen in GOD'S eye than in man's. For all the better thou art, and the less speech thou hast of men, the more is thy joy before GOD. Ah! how great it is to be worthy of love, and to be not loved. And what wretchedness it is,

to have the name and the habit of holiness, and be not so; but to cover pride, ire or envy under the clothes of Christ's childhood. A foul thing it is to have liking and delight in the words of men who can no more deem what we are in our soul than they wot what we think. For ofttimes they say that he or she is in the higher degree that is in the lower; and whom they say is in the lower, is in the higher. Therefore I hold it to be but madness to be gladder or sorrier whether they say good or ill. If we be trying to hide us from speech and praise of this world, GOD will shew to us His praise, and our joy. For that is His joy when we are strength-full to stand against the privy and open temptation of the devil, and to seek nothing but the honour and praise of Him, and that we might entirely praise Him. And that ought to be our desire, our prayer and our intent, night and day, that the fire of His love kindle

our hearts, and the sweetness of His grace be our comfort and our solace in weal and woe. Thou hast now heard a part how the fiend deceives, with his subtle craft, unknowing men and women. And if thou wilt do by good counsel and follow holy teaching, as I hope that thou wilt, thou shall destroy his traps, and burn in love's fire all the bands that he would bind thee with; and all his malice shall turn thee to joy, and him to more sorrow. GOD suffers him to tempt good men for their profit, that they may be the higher crowned, when they, through His help, have overcome so cruel an enemy, that oftentimes, both in body and soul, confounds many men.

In three manners, the devil has power to be in a man. In one manner, hurting the good they have by *nature*, as in dumb men, and in others, staining their thoughts. In another manner, snatching away the good

that they have of *grace :* and so he is in sinful men whom he has deceived through delight of the world and of their flesh, and leads them with him to hell. In the third manner, he torments a man's body, as we read that he has done (to) Job. But wit thee well, if he beguile thee not within, thou needst not dread what he may do to thee without, for he may do no more than GOD gives him leave to do.

CHAPTER II.

BECAUSE thou hast forsaken the solace and the joy of this world, and taken thee to solitary life, for GOD'S sake to suffer tribulation and anguish here, and afterwards to come to that bliss which never more ceases, I trow truly that the comfort of JESUS Christ, and the sweetness of His love, with the fire of the Holy Ghost, that purges all sin, shall be in thee, and with thee, leading thee and teaching thee how thou shalt think, how thou shalt pray, what thou shalt work, so that in a few years thou shalt have more delight to be by thy lone, and to speak to thy Love and thy Spouse JESUS Christ, Who is high in heaven, than if thou wert lady here of a thousand worlds. Men suppose

that we are in torture and in penance great; but we have more joy and more very delight in a day than they have in the world all their life. They see our body: but they see not our heart where our solace is. If they saw that, many of them would forsake all that they have, for to follow us. Therefore, be comforted and stalwart, and dread no annoy or anguish: but fasten all thine intent in JESUS, that thy life be good and convenient; and look that there be nothing in thee that should be displeasing to Him that thou dost not soon amend it. The state which thou art in, which is solitude, is most able of all other to revelation of the Holy Ghost. For when S. John was in the Isle of Patmos, then GOD shewed him His secrets. The goodness of GOD it is that He comforts them wonderfully that have no comfort of the world, if they give their heart entirely to Him, and covet not nor seek but Him: then He gives

Himself to them in sweetness and delight, in burning of love, and in joy and melody and dwells aye with them, in their soul, so that the comfort of Him departs never from them. And if they any time begin to err, through ignorance or frailty; soon He shews them the right way; and all that they have need of, He teaches them. No man to such revelation and grace on the first day may come; but through long travel and carefulness to love JESUS Christ, as thou shall here-afterward. Nevertheless, then he suffers them to be tempted in sore manners, both waking and sleeping. For aye the more temptations and the grievouser they stand against and overcome, the more they shall joy in His love when they are passed. Waking, they are sometimes tempted with foul thoughts, vile lusts, wicked delights, with pride, ire, envy, despair, presumption and other many. But their remedy shall be :

Prayer : Weeping : Fasting : Waking. These things, if they be done with discretion, they put away sin and filth from the soul, and make it clean to receive the love of JESUS Christ, Who may not be loved, but in cleanness. Also, sometimes the fiend tempts men and women, who are solitary, by their love in a quaint manner and a subtle : he transfigures himself in the likeness of an angel of light, and appears to them, and says he is one of GOD'S angels come to comfort them, and so he deceives fools. But they that are wise and will not quickly trust to all spirits, but ask counsel of knowing men, he can not beguile them. Also, I find written of a recluse, that was a good woman, to whom the ill-angel oft-times appeared in the form of a good angel, and said that he was come to bring her to heaven. Wherefore, she was right glad and joyful. But nevertheless, she told it to her Shrift-father, and he, as a wise

man and wary, gave her this counsel. When he comes, he said, bid him that he shew thee our Lady, S. Mary. When he has done so, say *Ave Maria*. She did so. The fiend said: "Thou hast no need to see her; my presence suffices to thee." And she said by all means she would see her. He saw that it behoved him either to do her will, or she would despise him: so quickly, he brought forth the fairest woman that might be as to her sight, and shewed to her. And she set her on her knees and said, *Ave Maria*. And so quickly all vanished away, and for shame never after came he to her. This I say not, because I hope he shall have leave to tempt thee in this manner, but because I will that thou beware, if any such temptation befall thee sleeping or waking, that thou trust not over quickly till thou knowest the truth. More privily he transfigures himself into an angel of light—that commonly all

men are tempted with—when he hides ill under the likeness of good. And that is in two manners. One is, when he eggs us on to over-great ease and rest of body, and softness to our flesh, for need to sustain our nature. For such thoughts he puts in us: that unless we eat well, and drink well, and sleep well, and lie soft and sit warm, we can not serve GOD, nor last in the labour that we have begun. But he thinks to bring us to over-great pleasure. Another is, when under the likeness of ghostly good, he entices us to sharp and over-great penance, for to destroy ourselves; and says thus: "Thou wot'st well that he who suffers most penance for GOD'S love, he shall have most meed. Therefore eat little, and feeble meat; and drink less, the thinnest drink is good enough to thee. Reck not of sleep: wear the hair-shirt and the habergeon. All thing that is affliction for thy flesh, do it; so that there

may be none that can pass thee in penance. He that speaks thee thus, is about to slay thee with over-great abstinence; as he that said the other to slay thee with over-little. Therefore, if we will be rightly disposed, it behoves us to set ourselves in a good mean, and that we may destroy our vices and hold our flesh under, and nevertheless that it should be stalwart in the service of JESUS Christ. Also, our enemy will not suffer us to be in rest when we sleep, but then he is about to beguile us in many manners. Sometimes, with ugly images, for to make us afraid and to make us hateful of our state: sometimes with fair images, fair sights and that seem comfortable; for to make us glad in vain, and make us think we are better than we are. Sometimes, tells us we are holy and good, for to bring us into pride; [sometimes says we are wicked and sinful for to make us fall into despair.] But

He Who is Ordainer of all things, suffers not that our sleep be without reward to us, if we dress our life to His Will. And wit thou well, thou sinnest not sleeping, if waking thou beest evermore without excess of meat and drink, and without ill-thoughts. But many a one the devil has deceived through dreams, when he has made them set their heart on them. For he has shewn them some truth, but afterwards beguiled them with one that was false. Therefore says the wise man that many cares follow dreams; and they fell that hoped in them. Wherefore that thou beest not beguiled with them, I will that thou wit that *there are six manners of dreams*. Two are, that no man, holy or other, may escape: they are, if their stomach be over-empty or over-full; then many vanities, in sore manners, befall them sleeping. The third is of illusions of our enemy. The fourth is, of thought before and of

illusions following. And the fifth through the revelation of the Holy Ghost, that is done in many a manner. The sixth is, of thoughts before that are due to Christ or Holy Church, revelation coming after. In thus many manners, the image of dreams touches men when they sleep. But so much the less shall we give faith to any dream, because we can not wit which is truth, which is false; which is of our enemy, which is of the Holy Ghost. For where many dreams are, there are many vanities. And many they may make to err, for they set up unwise men, and so deceive them.

CHAPTER III.

I KNOW that thy life is given to the service of God. Then is it shame to thee, unless thou beest as good, or better, within thy soul, as thou art seeming in the sight of men. Turn therefore thy thoughts perfectly to God, as it seems that thou hast done thy body. For I will not that thou shouldest ween that all are holy that have the habit of holiness, and are not occupied with the world. Nor that all are ill who discourse of earthly business. But they only are holy, what state or degree they be in, the which despise all earthly things, that is to say, love it not; and burn in the love of Jesus Christ; and all their desires are set to the joy of heaven, and hate all sin, and cease

not from good works, and feel a sweetness in their heart of the love without end: and nevertheless, they think themselves vilest of all, and hold themselves wretchedest, least and lowest. This is holy men's life; follow it and be holy. And if thou wilt be in the Apostles' reward, think not what thou forsookest, but what thou despisest. For they who follow JESUS Christ in willing poverty, and in meekness, and in charity, and in patience, forsake as much as they can covet who follow Him not. And consider with how great and how good will thou presentest thy vows before Him: for on that He has set His eyes, and if thou with great desire offerest thy prayers, with great fervour desirest to see Him, and seekest no earthly comfort, but the savour of Heaven, and in contemplation thereof hast thy delight. Wonderfully JESUS works in His lovers, those whom he reaves from the pleasure of flesh

and blood through tender love. He makes them to will no earthly thing, and makes them rise to the solace of Him, and to forget vanities and fleshly loves of the world, and to dread no sorrow that may fall: to diminish over-great bodily ease: to suffer for His love, seems to them joy; and to be solitary they have great comfort: so that they be not hindered of that devotion. Now mayst thou see that many are worse than they seem, and many are better than they seem, and namely among those that have the habit of holiness. Therefore force thyself, in all that thou mayest, that thou mayest be no worse than thou seemest. And if thou wilt do as I teach thee in this short form of living, I hope, through the grace of God, that if men hold thee to be good, thou shalt be well better.

CHAPTER IV.

AT the beginning then, bow thee entirely to thy Lord JESUS Christ. That turning to JESUS is naught else but turning from all the covetousness and the liking and the occupations and business of worldly things and of fleshly lust and of vain love: so that thy thought, that was ever downward, burrowing in the earth, whilst thou wert in the world, now should be aye upward like fire; seeking the highest place in heaven, right to thy Spouse, where He sits in His bliss. To Him thou art turned, when His grace illumines thine heart; and forsakes all vices, and conforms it to virtues and good manners, and to all manner of compliance and debonairness. And that thou mayst last

and grow in the goodness that thou hast begun without slowness, and sorriness, and irking of thy life; four things shalt thou have in thy thought, till thou beest in perfect love. For when thou art come thereto, thy joy and desire will aye be burning in Christ. One is: *the measure of thy life here, that it is so short that scarcely is it anything.* For we live but in a point—that is the least thing that may be. And soothly, our life is less than a point, if we liken it to the life that lasts aye. Another is: *uncertainty of our ending.* For we wot never when we shall die, nor where we shall die, nor how we shall die, nor whither we shall go when we are dead; and that GOD wills that this be uncertain to us, for He wills that we be aye ready to die. The third is: *that we shall answer before the righteous Judge,* for all the time that we have been here, how we have lived, what our occupation has been and why, and what good

we might have done when we have been idle. Therefore said the prophet: "He has called thee times again," that is every day He has lent us here for to spend in good use, and in penance, and in GOD'S service. If we waste it in earthly love and in vanities, full grievously must we be condemned and punished; for that is one of the greatest sorrows that may be: unless we try manfully in the love of GOD, and do good to all that we may, while our short time lasts. And every time that we think not on GOD we may count it as the thing that we have lost. The fourth is: *that we think how great the joy is that they have who last in GOD'S love to their ending.* For they shall be brethren and fellows with angels and holy men, loving and thanking, praising and seeing the King of Joy in the beauty and in the shining of His majesty. The which sight shall be reward and food, and all delights that any creature may think,

and more than any can tell, to all His lovers, without end. It is much easier to come to that bliss than to describe it. *Also think what pain and what sorrow and tormenting they shall have* who love not GOD above all things that one sees in this world, but defile their body in the pleasures and lusts of this life, in pride and greed and other sins ; they shall burn in the fire of hell with the devil whom they served, as long as GOD is in heaven with His servants, that is evermore.

CHAPTER V.

I WILL that thou beest aye climbing to JESUS-ward, and increasing thy love and thy service to Him; not as fools do; they begin in the highest degree and come down to the lowest. I say not that if thou hast begun unreasonable abstinence that thou hold it; but for many who were burning at the beginning and able to (capable of) the love of JESUS Christ, through over-great penance they have hindered themselves, and made themselves so feeble that they cannot love GOD as they should. In the which love that thou mayest wax aye more and more is my coveting and my admonition. I consider

thee never of the less merit if thou beest not in so great abstinence; but if thou set all thy thought how thou mayest love thy Spouse JESUS Christ more than thou hast done, then dare I say that thy reward is waxing not waning.

CHAPTER VI.

WHEREFORE, that thou may'st be rightly disposed both for thy soul and thy body, thou shalt understand four things. The first thing is: *what thing defiles a man.* The second thing: *what makes him clean.* The third: *what holds him in cleanness.* The fourth: *what thing draws him for to ordain his will entirely at GOD'S will.* For the first, wit thou that we sin in three things that make us foul: that is with *heart* and *mouth* and *deed.* The sins of the heart are these: Ill-thought: ill delight: assent to sin: desire of ill; wicked will: ill suspicion: undevotion: if thou lettest thine heart any time be idle, without occupation of the love, of the praising of GOD: ill dread:

ill love: error: fleshly affection to thy friends or to other that thou lovest: joy in any man's ill-faring, whether they be enemy or none: contempt of poor or sinful men: to honour rich men for their riches: unsuitable joy in any world's vanity: sorrow of the world: impatience: perplexity, that is doubt what to do and what not, for every man ought to be secure (about) what he shall do and what he shall leave: obstinacy in ill: annoyance (at having) to do good: sorrow that he did no more ill, or that he did not have that pleasure or that will of his flesh which he might have done: unstableness of thought: pain at penance: hypocrisy: love to please men: dread to displease them: shame of good deed: joy of ill deed: singular wit: desire for honour or dignity, or to be holden better than another, or richer, or fairer, or more to be dreaded: vain glory of any good of nature, of happening, or of grace:

shame of poor friends: pride of rich or of gentle kin, for all we alike are free before GOD'S face, unless our deeds make any better or worse than another, in spite of good counsel and of good teaching. *The sins of the mouth* are these: to swear oftentimes: forswearing: slander of Christ or of any of His Saints; to name His name without reverence; gainsaying and strife against truthfulness; murmuring against GOD for any anguish or trouble or tribulation that may befall on earth: to say GOD'S Service undevoutly and without reverence: backbiting; flattering: lying: abusing: cursing: defaming: quarrelling: threatening: sowing of discord: treason: false-witness: ill counsel: scorn: unbuxomness in speech: to turn good deeds to ill: to make them be holden ill who do them: (we ought to wrap up our neighbours' deeds in the best not the worst); exciting any man to ire: reprehend-

ing in another what one does one's self: vain speech: much speech: foul speech: to speak idle words: or to speak words not needful: praising: polishing of words: defending sin: shouting with laughter: making grimaces at any man: to sing secular songs and to love them: to praise ill-deeds: to sing more for the glory of men than of GOD. *The sins of deed are these:* gluttony: lechery: drunkenness: simony: witch-craft: breaking of the holy-days: sacrilege: to receive GOD'S Body in deadly sin: breaking of vows: apostacy: dissipation in GOD'S service: to set example of ill deeds: to hurt any man in his body, or in his goods, or in his fame: theft: rapine: usury: deceit: selling of righteousness: to hearken ill: to give to harlots: to withhold necessaries from the body, or to give it to excess: to begin a thing that is above our might: custom to sin: falling often into sin: feigning of more

good than we have : for to seem holier, more learned and wiser than we are : to hold office that we do not suffice to : or to hold one that cannot be held without sin : to lead dances : to bring up new fashions : to be rebellious against one's Sovereign : to insult those who are less : to sin in sight, in hearing, in smelling, in touching, in handling, in swallowing : in means : in signs : in beggings : writings. To receive the circumstances, that is to say time, place, manner, number, person, dwelling, knowledge, age, that makes thee sin more or less. To desire a sin or to be tempted : to constrain one to sin. Other many sins there are *of omission*, that is, of leaving good undone : when men leave the good they should do. Not thinking about GOD, nor dreading, nor praising Him, nor thanking Him for His gifts : to do not all that one does for love of GOD : to sorrow not for one's sins as one should do : not to dispose one's

self to receive grace. And if one have taken grace, not to use it as one ought ; not to keep it : to turn not to the inspiration of God : to conform not one's will to God's will : to give not attention to one's prayers, but mutter on and never reck save that they be said ; to do negligently what one was bound by vow to do, or by command, or else enjoined in penance : to draw out at length what should be done soon : having no joy at one's neighbour's profit as at one's own ; not sorrowing at his ill-faring : standing not against temptations : forgiving not those who have done one harm : keeping not faith with one's neighbour as one would that he did to one's self : and yielding not a good deed for another if one can. Amending not those sins before one's eyes : not appeasing strifes : not teaching them that are unlearned : not comforting them that are in sorrow, or in sickness, or in poverty, or in

penance, or in prison. These sins, and many others make men foul. *The things that cleanse us of that filth,* are three, against these three manners of sins. The first is: *sorrow of heart* against the sin of thought: and that it behoves (thee to) be so perfect that thou beest in full will never to sin more. And that thou mayest have sorrow for all thy sins. And that all joy and solace, except of God and in God, be put out of thine heart. The second is: *shrift of mouth;* against the sin of mouth. And that shall be *hasty,* without delaying. *Naked,* without excusing. Whole, without parting. Also (not) for to tell one sin to one priest and another to another. Say all that thou wottest to one, or else thy shrift is not worth. The Third is, *Satisfaction;* that has three parts, Fasting, Prayer, and Alms-Deed. Not only to give poor men meat and drink: but to forgive them that do thee wrong and pray for them: and

inform them who are at the point to perish what they shall do. For the third thing, thou shalt wit that cleanness behoves to be kept in heart, in mouth and in work. *Cleanness of heart*, three things keep: one is, watchful thought and stable about GOD. Another is, care to keep thy five wits, so that all the wicked stirrings of them be closed out of the flesh. The third, honest and profitable occupation. Also, *cleanness of mouth*, three things keep: one is that thou should'st bethink thee before thou speakest. Another is that thou beest not of great but of little speech; and specially ever till thine heart be established in the love of JESUS Christ: so that men think thou ever lookest on Him, whether thou speakest or not. But such a grace may'st thou not have on the first day: but with long travel and great care to love Him from habit, so that the eye of thine heart be aye upward, shalt thou come thereto.

The third, that thou for nothing, not even for meekness, shalt lie to any man. For every lie is sin and ill: and not GOD'S will. Thou needest not tell all the truth always, unless thou willest. But hate all lies. If thou sayest a thing of thyself that seems to thy praise, but thou sayst it to the praise of GOD and help of another, thou dost not unwisely for thou speakest truth. But if thou will have aught private, tell it to none but such a one that thou beest secure that it should not be shewed (disclosed) but only to the praise of GOD, of whom is all goodness, and who makes some better than others, and gives them special grace, not only for themselves, but also for them that will do well after their example. *Cleanness of work*, three things keep. One is: *a careful thought of death:* for the wise man says; "Bethink thee of thy last ending, and thou shalt not sin." The second: *flee from ill fellowship*, that

gives more example to love the world than GOD, earth than heaven, filth of body than cleanness of soul. The third is: *temperance and discretion in meat and drink*: that it be neither to excess, nor beneath suitable sustenance for thy body. For both come to one end: excess and over-great fasting: for neither is GOD's will—and that many will not suppose, for anything one may say. If you take sustenance of such good as GOD sends for the time and the day, whatever it be, I take out no manner of meat that Christian men use; with measure and discretion, thou dost well; for so did Christ and His Apostles. If you leave many meats that men have, not despising the meat that GOD has made for man's help, but because thou thinkest thou hast no need thereof, thou dost well: if thou seest that thou art stalwart to serve GOD, and that it breaks not thy stomach. For if thou hast broken it with over-great

abstinence, appetite for meat is reft from thee : and often shalt thou be in tremblings, as if thou wert ready to give up the ghost. And wit thou well, thou didst sin that deed. And thou may'st not wit soon whether thine abstinence be against thee, or with thee. For the time thou art going, I counsel thee that thou should'st eat better and more, as it comes, that thou beest not beguiled. And afterward, when thou hast proved many things, and overcome many temptations, and knowest better thyself and God than thou didst, then if thou seest that it be to be done, thou mayst take to greater abstinence. And meanwhile thou mayst do privy penance which all men need not know. Righteousness is not all in fasting or in eating. But thou art righteous, if contempt and praise, poverty and riches, hunger and need or delights and dainties be all alike to thee. If thou takest these with love of God, I hold

thee blessed and high before JESUS. Men who come to thee, they love thee because they see thy great abstinence, and because they see thee enclosed: but I may not love thee so lightly for anything I see thee do without, but if thy will be conformed entirely to GOD'S will. And set not by their praise and blame, and never give thou heed if they speak less good of thee than they did; but that thou shouldest be more burning in GOD'S love than thou wert. For one thing I warn thee: I hope that GOD has no perfect servant in earth without enemies of some men—For only wretchedness has no enemy. *For to draw us that we conform our will to GOD'S will:* are three things. One is, example of holy men and women, who were intent, night and day, to serve GOD, and dread Him and love Him. If we follow them on earth, we must be with them in heaven. Another is the goodness of our Lord, which despises none,

but gladly receives all that come to His mercy: and He is homelier to them than brother or sister, or any friend that they most love, or most trust in. The third is the wonderful joy of the kingdom of heaven, which is more than tongue may tell, or heart may think, or eye may see, or ear may hear. It is so great that, as in hell nothing might live for great pain but that the might of GOD suffers them not to die; so the joy in the sight of JESUS in His GOD-head is so great that they must die of joy, if it were not for His goodness, who wills that His lovers should be living aye in bliss: also His righteousness wills that all who loved Him not, be aye living in fire, which is horrible to any man that thinks: look then what it is to feel. But they who will not think of it and dread it now, they shall suffer it evermore. Now hast thou heard how thou mayst dispose thy life, and rule it to GOD'S will. But I wot

well that thou desirest to hear some special point of the love of JESUS Christ, and of contemplative life, which thou hast taken to thee in all men's sight. (According) As I have grace and knowledge, I will teach thee.

CHAPTER VII.

AMORE LANGUEO. These two words are written in the Book of Love, that is called the Song of Love, or the Song of Songs. For he that loves greatly, lists often to sing of his love, for joy that he or she has when they think on that they love, specially if their love be true and loving. And this is the English of these two words: "I languish for love." Separate men on earth have separate gifts and graces of GOD, but the special gift of those who lead the solitary life, is for to love JESUS Christ. Thou sayest to me, 'All men love Him who keep His commandments.' That is Truth. But all men who keep His bidding keep not also His Counsel. And all that do His Counsel are not all fulfilled by the sweetness of His love, nor feel the fire of burning love of heart.

Therefore, the diversity of love makes the diversity of holiness and of need. In heaven, the angels who are most burning in love, are nearest to God. Also, men and women that have most of God's love, whether they do penance or none ; they shall be in the highest degree in heaven : they who love Him less, in the lower order. If thou lovest Him much, great joy and sweetness and burning thou feelest in His love, that is thy comfort and strength night and day. If thy love be not burning in Him : little is thy delight. For Him may no man feel in joy and sweetness, unless they be clean and filled with His love ; and thereto shalt thou come with great travail in prayer and thanking, having such meditations as are all on the love and the praising of God. And when thou art at thy meal, ever love God in thy thought, at each moment, and say thus in thine heart : *Loved be Thou, King : and thanked be Thou,*

King, and blessed be Thou, King, JESU all my joying, of all Thy good gifts: Who for me spilt Thy blood, and died on the rood. Do Thou give me grace to sing the song of Thy praise. And think it not only whiles thou eatest, but both before and after, and ever when thou prayest or speakest. Or if thou hast other thoughts, that thou hast more sweetness in and devotion than in those that I teach thee, thou may'st think them. For I hope that GOD will put such thoughts in thine heart, as He is pleased with, and as thou art ordained for. When thou prayest, look not how much thou sayest, but how well: that the love of thine heart be aye upward, and thy thought on what thou sayst as much as thou canst. If thou beest in prayers and meditations all the day, I wot well that thou must wax greatly in the love of JESUS Christ, and feel much of delight, and within short time.

CHAPTER VIII.

THREE degrees of love I shall tell thee, for I would that thou mightest win to the highest. The first degree is called *Insuperable*. The second *Inseparable*. The third is, *Singular*. Thy love is Insuperable, when nothing that is contrary to GOD'S love overcomes it: but it is stalwart against all temptations; and stable, whether thou beest in ease or in anguish, or in health or in sickness: so that men think that thou wouldest not, even to have all the world without end, make GOD angry at any time: and thou wert liefer, if so it should be, to suffer all the pain and woe that might come to any creature, before thou wouldst do the thing that should displease Him. In this manner shall thy love

be Insuperable that nothing can bring it down, but it may aye spring on high. Blessed is he or she who is in this degree: but yet are they blesseder who might hold to this degree and turn to the other, that is to *Inseparable*. *Inseparable* is thy love, when all thine heart, and thy thought, and thy might is so wholly, so entirely and so perfectly fastened, set and established in JESUS Christ, that thy thought comes never from Him, never departs from Him, sleeping excepted: and as soon as thou awakest, thine heart is on Him, saying *Ave Maria*, or *Gloria Tibi, Domine*, or *Pater Noster*, or *Miserere mei, DEUS*, if thou hast been tempted in thy sleep; or thinking on His love and His praise as thou didst waking. When thou canst at no time forget Him, waking or sleeping, whatso thou dost or sayst, then is thy love *Inseparable*. Full great grace have they that be in this degree of love. And methinks

that thou, who hast nothing else to do but for to love GOD, mayst come thereunto if any may get it.

The third degree is highest and most wondrous to win. That is called *Singular*, for it has no peer. *Singular* love is when all comfort and solace is closed out of thine heart, but of JESUS Christ alone. Other joy it delights not in. For the sweetness of Him in this degree is so comforting, and lasting in His love, so burning and gladdening, that he or she who is in this degree can as well feel the fire of love burning in their soul, as thou canst feel thy finger burn if thou puttest it in the fire. But that fire, if it be hot, is so delectable and so wonderful, that I cannot tell it. Then, thy soul is loving JESUS, thinking of JESUS, desiring JESUS; in covetousness of Him breathing; to Him singing: of Him burning; in Him resting. Then the song of praise and of love has come. Then, thy

thought turns into song and into melody. Then it behoves thee to sing the psalms which before thou said'st. Then must thou be long over a few psalms. Then, thou wilt think death sweeter than honey, for then thou art full of sighs to see Him whom thou lovest. [Then mayst thou boldly say "I languish for love."] Then mayst thou say "I sleep, and my heart wakes."

In the first degree, men may say "I languish for love," or "I long in love." And in the second degree also: for languishing is when men fail for sickness, and they who are in these two degrees fail from all the covetousness of this world, and from lust and liking of sinful life, and set their will and their heart to the love of God—therefore they may say "I languish for love," and much more that are in the second degree than in the first. But the soul that is in the third degree is all burning fire, and like the

nightingale that loves song and melody, and fails for great love: so that the soul is only comforted in praising and loving GOD; and till Death come, is singing ghostly to JESUS, and in JESUS, and JESUS; not crying bodily with the mouth—of that manner of singing I speak not, for both good and evil have that song. And this manner of song have none unless they be in this third degree of love: to the which degree it is impossible to come, but in a great multitude of love. Therefore, if thou wilt wot what kind of joy that song has, I tell thee, that no man wots, save he or she who feels it, who has it, and who loves GOD singing therewith. One thing tell I thee, it is of heaven, and GOD gives it to whom He will, but not without great grace coming before. Who has it, he thinks all the song and all the minstrelsy of earth naught but sorrow and woe (compared) thereto. In sovereign rest shall they be who

get it. Wanderers and brawlers, and keepers of comers and goers early and late night and day, or any who are seized with any sin witfully and willingly, or who have delight in any earthly thing, they are also farther therefrom than heaven is from earth. In the first degree, are many: in the second degree are full few; but in the third degree are scarcely any: for aye the greater is the perfection the fewer followers it has. In the first degree, men are likened to the stars, in the second to the moon, in the third to the sun. Therefore says S. Paul: "Others of the sun, others of the moon, others of the stars," so it is of the lovers of GOD. In this third degree, if thou mayst win thereto, thou shalt know of more joy than I have told thee yet. And among other affections and songs, thou mayst, in thy longing, sing this in thine heart to thy Lord JESUS, when thou dost covet His coming and thy going: "*When*

*wilt Thou come to comfort me: and bring me out of care, and give me Thee, Whom I may see, having evermore? My heart when shall it burst? for love then languished I no more. For love my thought has fast, and I am fain to fare away. I stand still mourning for the loveliest of lore; . . . * is love-longing; it draws me to my day; The brand of sweet burning for it holds me aye: From place and from playing: till I may get sight of my sweet One, Who never wends away. In wealth be our waking, without hurt or night. My love is everlasting, and longs unto that sight.*"

* The text is imperfect here.

CHAPTER IX.

IF thou wilt be well with GOD, and have grace to rule thy life, and come to the joy of love: this name JESUS, fasten it so fast in thy heart that it come never out of thy thought. And when thou speakest to Him, and through custom sayst, JESUS, it shall be in thine ear, joy; in thy mouth, honey; and in thine heart, melody: for men shall think joy to hear that name be named, sweetness to speak it, mirth and song to think it. If thou thinkest (on) JESUS continually, and holdest it firmly, it purges thy sin, and kindles thine heart; it clarifies thy soul, it removes anger and does away slowness. It wounds in love and fulfils charity. It chases the devil, and puts out

dread. It opens heaven, and makes a contemplative man. Have JESUS in mind, for that puts all vices and phantoms out from the lover. And often hail Mary, both day and night. Much love and joy shalt thou feel, if thou wilt do after this teaching. Thou need'st not covet greatly many books: hold love in thine heart and work, and thou hast all that we can say or write: for fulness of the law is charity: on that hangs everything.

CHAPTER X.

BUT now, thou mayst ask me and say, "Thou speakest so much of love; tell me—*What is love, and where is love. And how I shall love* GOD *verily. And how that I may know that I love Him. And in what state I may most love Him.*" These are hard questions to teach, to a feeble man and fleshly as I am. But nevertheless therefore, I shall not delay that I shall not shew my wit, and as I think it may be. For I hope in the help of JESUS, who is the well of love and peace and sweetness. Thy first asking is: *What is love?* And I answer: Love is a burning yearning after GOD, with a wonderful delight and certainty. GOD is light and burning. Light clarifies our reason; burn-

ing kindles our will, that we desire naught but Him. Love is a life, joining together the loving and the loved. For meekness makes us sweet to GOD. Purity joins us to GOD. Love makes us one with GOD. Love is the beauty of all virtues. Love is the thing through which GOD loves us, and we Him, and each one of us loves others. Love is the desire of the heart, aye thinking on that it loves; and when it has that it loves, then it joys and nothing can make it sorry. (Love is yearning between two, with lastingness of thoughts.) Love is a stirring of the soul for to love GOD for Himself, and all other things for GOD; the which love, when it is ordained in GOD, it does away all inordinate love in anything that is not good. But all deadly sin is inordinate love for a thing that is naught: then love puts out all deadly sin. Love is a virtue which is the rightest affection of man's soul. Truth may

be without love: but it cannot help without it. Love is a perfection of learning, virtue of prophecy, fruit of truth, help of sacraments, establishing of wit and knowledge; riches of pure men; life of dying men. So, how good love is. If we suffer to be slain; if we give all that we have, (down) to a beggar's staff; if we know as much as men may know on earth, all this is naught but ordained sorrow and torment. If thou wilt ask how good is he or she, ask how much he or she loves; and that no man can tell. For I hold it folly to judge a man's heart; that none knows save GOD. Love is a righteous turning from all earthly things, and is joined to GOD, without departing, and kindled with the fire of the Holy Ghost: far from defiling, far from corruption, bound to no vice of this life. High above all fleshly lusts, aye ready and greedy for the contemplation of GOD. In all things not over-

come. The sum of all good affections. Health of good manners; goal of the commandments of God; death of sins; life of virtues. Virtue whilst fighting lasts, crown of over-comers. Mirth* to holy thoughts. Without that, no man may please God; with that, no man sins. For if we love God in all our heart, there is nothing in us through which we serve sin. Very love cleanses the soul, and delivers it from the pain of hell, and from the foul service of sin, and from the ugly fellowship of the devils; and (out) of the fiend's son, makes God's son, and partner of the heritage of heaven. We shall force ourselves to clothe us in love, as iron or coal does in the fire, as the air does in the sun, as the wool does in the dye. The coal so clothes itself in fire that it is fire. The air so clothes itself in the sun that it is light.

* Two MSS. substitute "arms" for "mirth."

And the wool so substantially takes the dye that it is like it. In this manner shall a true lover of JESUS Christ do: his heart shall so burn in love, that it shall be turned into the fire of love, and be as it were all fire; and he shall so shine in virtues that no part of him shall be murky in vices.

The second asking is: *Where is love?* And the answer: love is in thine heart, and in the will of man; not in his hand, nor in his mouth: that is to say, not in his work, but in his soul, "For many speak good and do good, and love not GOD: as hypocrites, who suffer great penance, and seem holy in man's sight. But because they seek praise and honour of men, and favour, they have lost their meed: and in the sight of GOD, they are devil's sons, and ravishing wolves. But if a man give alms-deed, and take him to poverty and do penance, it is a sign that he loves GOD: but therefore loves he Him

not, save when he forsakes the world only for GOD's love, and sets all his thought on GOD, and loves all men as himself: and all the good deeds that he may do, he does them with intent to please JESUS Christ, and to come to the rest of heaven. Then he loves GOD: and that love is in his soul, and so his deeds shew without. If thou speakest good and doest good, men suppose that thou lovest good: therefore look well that thy thought be in GOD, or else thou deceivest thyself, and deceivest men. Nothing that I do without (outside) proves that I love GOD.

For a wicked man might do as much penance in body, as much waking and fasting as I do. How may I then ween that I love, or hold myself better, on account of that which any man may do? Certainly, my heart, whether it loves my GOD or not, wots no one but GOD, for nought that they may

see me do. Wherefore, love is in will verily, not in work, but in a sign of love. For he that says he loves GOD, and will not do what is in him to shew love, tell him that he lies. Love will not be idle, it is working some good evermore. If it cease working, wit thou that it cools and goes away.

The third asking is: *How shall I verily love GOD?* I answer; Very love is to love Him with all thy might, stalwartly: in all thine heart, wisely: in all thy soul, devoutly and sweetly. Stalwartly can no man love Him save he be stalwart. He is stalwart, who is meek; for all ghostly strength comes of meekness;—on whom rests the Holy Ghost? in a meek soul. Meekness governs us and keeps us in all our temptations, so that they overcome us not. But the devil deceives many that are meek, through tribulations, and reproofs, and backbitings. But if thou beest wroth for any

anguish of this world, or for any word that men say of thee, or for aught that men say to thee, thou art not meek, nor mayst thou love God stalwartly. For love is stalwart as death, which slays every living thing on earth, and hard as hell that spares not them that are dead. And he who loves God perfectly grieves Him not, whatever shame or anguish he may suffer; but he has delight and covets that he might be worthy for to suffer torment and pain for Christ's love: and he has joy that men reprove him and speak ill of him. Like a dead man, what so men do or say, he answers not. Right-so, whoso loves God perfectly, they are not stirred for any word that man may say. For he or she cannot love, that cannot suffer pain or anger for their friend's love. For whoso loves, they have no pain. Proud men or women love not stalwartly, for they are so weak, and they fall at every stirring of

the wind that is temptation. They seek a higher place than Christ ; for they will have their will done, whether it be with right or with wrong : and Christ wills that nothing but well be done, and without harm to other men. But who is verily meek, they will not have their will in this world, but that they may have it in the other fully. In nothing may men sooner overcome the devil than in Meekness, which he much hates. For he may wake, and fast and suffer pain more than any other creature may : but meekness and love may he not have. Also, it behoves thee to love God wisely, and that thou canst not do save thou beest wise. Thou art wise, when thou art poor without desire of this world, and despisest thyself for love of Christ : and expendest all thy wit and all thy might in His service. For some who seem wise are most fools, for all their wisdom they spill in covetousness and care about the world. If

thou sawest a man have precious stones wherewith he might buy a kingdom, if he gave them for an apple, as a child will do, rightly mightest thou say that he was not wise but a great fool. Just so, if we will, we have precious stones: Poverty and penance and ghostly travail, with the which we may buy the kingdom of heaven. For, if thou lovest poverty and despisest riches and delights of this world, and holdest thyself vile and poor, and thinkest thou hast naught of thyself save sin: for this poverty, thou shalt have riches without end. And if thou hast *sorrow for thy sins*, and because thou art so long in exile out of thy country, and forsakest the solace of this life: thou shalt have for this sorrow the joy of heaven. And if thou beest *in travail*, and punishest thy body reasonably and wisely, by wakings, fastings, and in prayers and meditations, and sufferest heat and cold, hunger and

thirst, privation and anguish for the love of JESUS Christ; for this travail thou shalt come to rest that lasts aye, and sit on a settle of joy with angels. But some there are who love not wisely, like children who love an apple, more than a castle. So do many; they give the joy of heaven for a little delight of their flesh, that is not worth a plum. Now canst thou see, that whoso will love wisely, it behoves him to love lasting things, lastingly; and passing things, passingly; so that his heart be settled and fastened on nothing but GOD. And if thou wilt love JESUS verily, thou shalt not only love Him stalwartly and wisely, but also *devoutly and sweetly*. Sweet love is when thy body is chaste and thy thought clean. Devout love is; when thou offerest thy prayers and thy thoughts to GOD with ghostly joy, and burning heart in the heat of the Holy Ghost; so that men think that thy soul is as it were drunken for

delight and solace of the sweetness of JESUS ; and thy heart conceivest so much of GOD's help that men think thou mayst never be departed from Him : and then thou comest into such rest and peace in soul, and quiet, without thoughts of vanity, (or) of vices, as if thou wert in silence and sleep, and set in Noe's ship, so that nothing may hinder thee from devotion and sweet love. For thou hast gotten His love : all thy life, until death come, in joy and comfort : and thou art verily Christ's lover : and he rests in peace whose place is made in peace.

The fourth asking was : *how thou mightest know that thou wast in love and charity.* I answer : that no man wots on earth that they are in charity ; save it be through any privilege or special grace that GOD has given to any man or woman : that all others may not take example by. Holy men and women trow that they have truth and hope and

charity : and in that do as well as they may, and hope certainly that they shall be safe ; they wot it not so quickly ; for if they wish, their merit were the less. And Solomon says it is so with righteous men and wise men, and that their works are in God's hand. And nevertheless, a man wots not whether he be worthy hatred or love ; but all is reserved uncertain for another world. Nevertheless, if any had grace that he might win to the third degree of love, which is called *Singular*, he should know that he was in love. But in such manner were the knowing, that he might never bear himself the higher, nor be in less care to love God ; but so much the more that he is secure of love, will he be busy to love Him and dread Him, Who has made him so, and done that goodness to Him ; and he that is so high, he will not hold himself worthier than the sinfullest man that goes on earth. Also seven

experiments are there, that a man be in charity. The first is; when all covetousness of earthly things is quenched in him. For whereso covetousness is, is no love of Christ. Then, if he have no covetousness, sign is that he has love. The second is, burning yearning for heaven. For when men have felt aught of that savour, the more they love, the more they covet: and he that has not felt, he desires not. Therefore, when anyone is given so much, till he love thereof (so) that he can find no joy in his life: token has he that he is in charity. The third is; if his tongue be changed, that was wont to speak of earth; now speaks of GOD, and of the life that lasts aye. The fourth is: exercise of ghostly profit. As if any man or woman give themselves entirely to GOD's services, and meddle with no earthly business. The fifth is: when the thing that is hard of itself seems light for to do; the which love

makes. For as Austin says: "Love it is which brings the far thing near-to-hand, and the impossible to the openly possible." The sixth is: hardness of thought to suffer all anguish and hurt that comes—without this, all the other suffices not. For whatso befalls him shall not make a righteous man sorry. For he who is righteous, hates naught but sin; he loves naught but GOD, before GOD: he dreads naught but to anger GOD. The seventh is: delectability in soul, when he is in tribulation, and makes praise to GOD in the anger that he suffers. And this shews well that he loves GOD, when no sorrow can bring him down. For many love GOD while they are at ease; and in adversity they grumble, and fall into so great sorriness, that scarcely may any man comfort them: and so slander they GOD, striving and fighting against His judgments. And that is caitiff praise that any wealth of the world makes:

but that praise is of great price that no violence of sorrow can do away.

The fifth asking was: *In what state men may most love* GOD? I answer, in such state as it be that men are in most rest of body and soul, and least occupied with any needs or business of this world. For the thought of the love of JESUS Christ, and of the joy that lasts aye, seeks outward rest, so that it be not hindered by comers and goers, and occupation of worldly things; and it seeks within great silence from the annoyances of desires, and of vanities, and of earthly thoughts. And especially, all who love contemplative life they seek rest in body and soul. For a great Doctor says: "They are GOD'S throne who dwell still in one place, and are not running about, but in sweetness of Christ's love are fixed." And I have loved for to sit: for no penance, nor fantasy, nor that I wished men to talk of

me, nor for no such thing: but only because I knew that I loved GOD more, and longer lasted within the comfort of love: than going, or standing, or kneeling. For sitting am I in most rest, and my heart most upward. But therefore, peradventure, it is not best that another should sit, as I did and will do to my death, save he were disposed in his soul, as I was.

CHAPTER XI.

SEVEN gifts of the Holy Ghost are in men and women who are ordained to the joy of heaven and lead their life in this world righteously. These they are: *Wisdom: Understanding: Counsel: Strength: Knowledge: Pity* and the *Fear of* GOD. Begin we at *Counsel*, for thereof is most need at the beginning of our works, which we dislike not afterwards. With these seven gifts, the Holy Ghost touches separate men separately. *Counsel* is doing away with the world's riches, delights, and all things with which men may be ensnared in thought or deed: and therewith (i.e. *Counsel*) be drawn inwardly to contemplation of GOD. *Understanding* is, to know what is for to do, and

what to leave (undone): and that which shall be given, to give it to them that have need, not to others that have no need. *Wisdom* is forgetting of earthly things, and thinking of heaven, with discretion in all men's deeds. In this gift, shines contemplation, that is, as S. Austen says "A ghostly death of fleshly affection through the joy of a raised thought." *Strength* is; enduring to fulfil good purpose, that it be not left, neither for weal nor for woe. *Pity is:* that a man be mild: and gainsay no holy Writ when it smites his sins, whether he understand it or not; but with all his might that he purge the vileness of sin, in himself and in others. *Knowledge* is that (which) makes a man in good hope, not making him quake for his righteousness, but sorrowing for his sin; and that a man gather earthly good only to the honour of God, and to other men's advantage more than to his own.

The *Fear of God* is: that we turn not again to our sin for any egging on: and then is fear perfect in us and holy, when we dread to anger GOD in the least sin that we can know, and flee it as poison.

CHAPTER XII.

TWO lives there are that Christian men live. One is called Active life, for it is more in bodily work. Another, contemplative life, for it is in more ghostly sweetness. Active life is greatly outward, and in more travail and in more peril, because of the temptations that are in the world. Contemplative life is largely inward, therefore it is more enduring and more certain, restfuller, more delectable, lovelier and more rewarding. For, it has joy in GOD's love, and savour in the life that lasts aye, in this present time, if it be rightly led. And that feeling of joy in the love of JESUS passes all other merits in earth. For it is so hard to come to, because of the frailty of our flesh, and the many temptations that we are beset with, which hinder us night and day: all other things that come are light in regard

thereof; for that may no man deserve, but only it is given of GOD'S goodness to them who verily give themselves to contemplation and to quiet for Christ's love. To men and women who betake themselves to *active life*, two things befall. One: to appoint their household in fear and in the love of GOD, and to find them in necessaries, and themselves keep GOD'S commandments entirely. Doing to their neighbours as they will that they do to them. Another is that they do, so far as they can, the seven works of mercy. The which are: to feed the hungry: to give the thirsty a drink; to clothe the naked: to harbour them that have no housing: to visit the sick, to comfort them that are in prison; to bury dead men.

All that can and who have property, they may not be quit with one or two of these; but it behoves them to do them all, if they will on Dooms-Day have the benison that

JESUS shall give to all who do them. Or else they may dread the malison that all men have who will not do them, when they had goods to do them with.

Contemplative life has two parts: a lower and a higher. The lower part is meditation of holy writing, that is GOD's word, and in other good thoughts and sweet that men have of the grace of GOD, about the love of JESUS Christ, and also in praising GOD in psalms and hymns and in prayers. The higher part of contemplation is beholding and yearning after the things of heaven, and joy in the Holy Ghost: that men have oft, although it be so that they be not praying with the mouth, but only thinking of GOD, and of the beauty of angels, and of holy souls. Then may I say that contemplation is a wonderful joy of GOD's love; the which joy is praising GOD, that cannot be told; and that wonderful praising is in the soul:

and for abundance of joy and sweetness, it ascends into the mouth; so that the heart and the tongue agree in one, and body and soul joy, living in God. A man or woman that is appointed to contemplative life, first God inspires them to forsake this world, and all the vanity and covetousness and vile lust thereof. Afterwards He leads them by their lone and speaks to their heart, and as the prophet says "He gives them to suck of the sweetness of the beginning of love": and then He sets them in the will to give themselves wholly to prayers and meditations and tears. Afterwards, when they have suffered many temptations, and when the foul annoyances of thoughts that are idle, and of vanities which will encumber those who cannot destroy them, are passing away, He makes them gather up their heart to them and fasten it only in Him, and opens to the eye of their souls the gates of heaven:

and then the fire of love verily lies in their heart, and burns therein, and makes it clean from all earthly filth, and afterwards they are contemplative men, and ravished in love. For contemplation is a sight; and they see into Heaven with their ghostly eye. But thou shalt wit that no man has perfect sight of heaven, whilst they are living bodily here. But as soon as they die, they are brought before GOD, and see Him face to face, and eye to eye, and dwell with Him without end. For Him they sought, and Him they coveted, and Him they loved, with all their might.

Lo, Margaret, I have told thee shortly the Form of Living, and how thou mayst come to perfection, and to love Him whom thou hast taken thee to. If it do thee good and profit to thee, thank GOD, and pray for me. The grace of JESUS Christ be with thee, and keep thee. Amen.

Here endeth "The Form of Perfect Living."

Our Daily Work.

(A Mirror of Discipline.)

Our Daily Work.

(A Mirror of Discipline.)

THREE things are needful to every man ; to increase his reward, through GOD'S grace helping, Who shall lead him. The first ; that man be in honest work, without losing of his time. The second ; that he do his work with a freedom of spirit, in place and in time, as work falls to each. The third ; that his outward bearing, whereso-ever he come, be so honest and fair, that praise is (given) to GOD, a stirring up of good to all who see him, as the Apostle bids : *Omnia in vobis honesti et secundum ordinem fiant*, that is "That ye do : be it done honestly and in order."

FIRST PART OF THE BOOK.

AT the first: man shall look that he lose not his short time, nor spend it wrongly, nor in idleness let it pass away. GOD has lent man his time, to serve GOD in, and to gather grace with good works, to buy heaven with. Not only this short time flies from us, but also the time of our life, as the wise man says: "Our life-time passes away." And S. Gregory says:—"Our life is like a man in a ship; sit he, stand he, sleep he, wake he, ever he gets thitherward where the ship is driving with the force of the weather. So we, in this short time, whatsoever we do, we drive ever to our end." And our enemy, Death, follows us ever at our back, with a sharp spear to stick us through, therefore

says Seneca, "life flies, death follows." And S. Augustine says "Life is nothing else but a swift running to death." Therefore, there is naught to tell by, how long man lives: save how well. Yet this short life is uncertain: wherefore says Job:—"I know not how long I may endure, and whether after a short space my Maker may take me away." And S. Gregory says: "I wot not the time I shall dwell, nor when I shall be taken hence and led to doom." And S. Jerome says:—"Nothing so much beguiles man, as that he knows not the time of his life, that to him is uncertain." And yet hopes he for long life for himself, as if he might, at his will, drive Death back. Thus was the rich man deceived of whom speaks the Gospel of S. Luke xvi. Therefore saith the psalm: "if riches increase, set not your heart upon them." For riches fail and last not with man, but glide away like a phantom.

But when men have got goods together, with right, or with wrong and poor men's curses, then suddenly, they go from their goods, or else their goods from them. And Holy Writ says "The world passeth away and the lust thereof." A man that is fallen in the water, and through the force of the water is borne forth and torn from the ground; if he may get anything that has good fastening like a root or a stake, he may hinder the water from carrying him away; but by anything that fleets as he does himself, he cannot fasten himself: and soothly, willy nilly, in this life, as if in water, we are ever passing with the goods of this world; and there is naught in this world to fasten by, so that we shall not pass: for the Wise Man saith, "We shall all die, and like water slip away into the Earth." And therefore Job speaks, as if he said "Riches and friends had I many, but they all could not hinder me

from going forth and not coming again." And by what path, man shall go, the prophet shews: "All flesh is grass, and all the glory of it as the flower of the field." Man's flesh is as hay, and all his joy and splendour as the flower of the meadow. Hay is first green grass, and soon after brings forth flowers: and a while after, the flowers dry and fall; after it is mown down with the scythe, and dried and taken to a house to be beasts' food. Thus it befalls man: in his childhood he springs and grows as the grass does; after, he comes to manhood and flowers in fairness and strength and wit and having of goods; afterwards: he draws to age, and then his flowers fall, that are his virtue, fairness, strength, wit and other power; afterwards, he is stricken down with the scythe of Death, afterwards taken to a house to beasts' food, that is, dug into the earth to feed worms. Therefore says the holy

man; "when a man dies, he shall dwell with serpents and beasts." A dead man is so disgusting to the world, that one cannot let him be in his house three days together; but bears him forth, that he harm none with the odour. Therefore, it is now time to work; for in the time to come there is no time to work, but to receive rewards for deeds done erewhile. And this the angel affirms with oath and says, "For the angel has sworn that there will be no further time." Do we then as the Apostle says: "While we have time, let us work good to all." And as the Apostle counsels us, he did himself: for from the first hour of the day until the fifth, he worked with his hands to win his food: and from the fifth to the tenth, he preached to the people: from the tenth to even he served the poor and pilgrims with such goods as he had; by night he was praying, and thus spent he his time.

In three ways, man loses his time : in idleness ; or in works that no good comes of ; or in good works, but not ordained as they should be. Against idleness, Solomon says— "Idleness teaches much evil" ; and Holy Writ says "Whoso followeth idleness, is most foolish." A great fool he is who forbears not from the thing that harms him. More fool he is, because he wins himself no reward : most fool he is, because he wins himself pain. Therefore God blames the idle : and says "Why standest thou all the day idle ?" Idleness wastes the goods that are prudently gotten, and entices the fiend to the house : for as by good works the fiend is hindered from entering man's heart, so idleness draws him thereto. And Seneca says : "he lives not to himself who lives for his stomach and the ease of his flesh whenever he can." For Job says "Man is born to labour." To work was man bound

after he had sinned, through God's bidding, Who said to him: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread, till thou returnest unto the ground from whence thou wast taken; because from the ground thou art, and into the ground thou shalt go." Thou shalt work stalwartly and not faintly, for He bids thee work, "with sweat of thy face, even till thou returnest to the earth"; that is, all thy life time that thou losest no time in idleness. Idleness smites a man as if he were in a paralysis, and makes his limbs dry that he cannot work. Therefore says the Psalmist: "They have hands and handle not; feet have they but they walk not; mouths have they but they speak not; eyes have they and see not; ears have they and hear not"; for their limbs are so bound in sin, that to all good things, they are as dead; and to evil, they are easy. Idleness is nurse to all vices, and makes a man reck-

less about not doing what he is bound to do. And when the fiend finds a man idle, he puts in his heart foul thoughts of fleshly filth, and other follies that may bring him to sin; afterwards, he eggs him on to do them indeed, and thus he does against the Apostle's bidding: "Will not to give place to the devil." The idle man makes himself unworthy to dwell in any place but hell. In heaven he cannot dwell; for heaven is full reward to those who here spend their time in works that they hope are pleasing to Christ. In purgatory the idle may not dwell; for there only the good are purged in that cleansing fire, till they be as clean of sin as when they were christened: therefore saith the Psalm-wright:—*In labore hominum non sunt et cum hominibus non flagellabuntur:* that is thus for to say; "The idle work not with men; therefore in purgatory they shall not be

pained with those men who are on the way to heaven." *

Great shame it is to be idle in this time of grace, in the which we are hired to work; and if we work as we ought, great reward awaits us. GOD gives us an example of work, by Himself, as the Apostle says: "He emptied Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: wherefore GOD hath also highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of JESUS, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that JESUS Christ is Lord, to the glory of GOD the Father."

* Rolle's free rendering of the Latin is added here from the *Thornton MS.* It does not occur in the Arundel MS.

Over-proud then, and over-delicate is the servant, who rests in battle, and sees His Lord assailed and evil-wounded by His enemies. Also, we ought to work in this time of grace; for we are GOD'S bought thralls, with the price of His dear-worthy Blood, to work in His vine-yard: and yet He doth promise us reward, if we do with good-will that which, as a debt, we ought to do. To His private friends, before the time of grace, GOD promised only earthly goods, if they did well; to us the bliss of Heaven, if we do well. It was long after, before they might come thereto; for they went to hell and abode there, some a thousand years, some two, some three, before they came to heaven. But now may men in a little time win heaven, as, if any die soon after he is christened, or if he have done full penance for his misdeeds; or be martyred for GOD'S love. The time of supper that the gospel of

S. Luke speaks of, to the which GOD bade His servants call all that were bidden, is the time of grace; which is now, in the which all is ready; so that there is naught else to do but wash and go to meat, that is cleanse them of all their sins that they have done since they were born. What losing of time it is to travail about things that no profit comes of. Man ought to travail only to the worship of GOD, and his soul-health. Thou shalt not deem the man has lived long though he go with a staff stooping, and be grey-haired; but deem him so old as he has lived well. Therefore answered Barlaham to Josaphath, his disciple, when he asked him how old he was: "I am," quoth he, "of 45 years." "Master," quoth Josaphath, "methinks thou art of 60 years and more." Then said Barlaham, "Since I was born has been 60 years; but those years that I spent in idleness and sin before I took me to this

life, I hold as years of death. But all those I call years of life that I have served JESUS Christ my Lord in, through His dear-worthy grace." Whoso would bethink himself what time steals from him in long eating and drinking, in excess and useless works, idle speech, and idle and foul thoughts, useless jests and other vanities that men delight them in, he may soothly understand that though he be old in years, that he has lived little time in the manner that he ought to have lived; for he lived not to his profit, nor won him reward, but peradventure pain for losing time.

It were a wonderful thing if the man who gives himself to business of the world more than he need, had no hindrance in prayer, in rest of heart, in soothfastness of words, in perfection of good works, in love to GOD and all Christian men. Therefore, holy men, before now, who knew their hindrances,

they fled the world with all its vanities, as if it had been accursed; for it seemed to them that they could not live a righteous life therein; and therefore went they into the wilderness, where they trowed to serve GOD in peace. Therefore says Seneca, "I have become more avaricious, and more cruel, and more inhuman because I was among men."

Three manners of occupations there are: as, various and much brawling; raking about; and much caring about earthly things. Against much brawling, Solomon says "The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water." "Let the water out," that is, "let the tongue fleet out in quarrelling." But to the knowledge of GOD or of himself may no one come, who lets his heart fleet out with much useless speech: for he makes a way in himself for the fiend. Therefore Solomon likens such to a city without a

wall: "He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down and without walls." And because so much hindrance of good is in much speech, the philosopher binds his disciples with silence (during) their first five years. Also, Abbot Agathon bore a stone in his mouth for three years to teach him to hold still. Against those who are ever raking about to feed their wits with vanities and lusts is the teaching of the angel, who taught holy Abbot Arsenius and said:—"Arsenius, flee the world and its yearnings: keep thee in rest, bridle thy tongue," that it fleet not out in quarrelling nor idle speech. Where these three are is a way to God, and withdrawing from evil. It tells of an Abbot who (for) fully 20 years sat in his school, and never lifted up his head to see the school-roof. Against those who care over-much about worldly goods, Solomon says this:—"Vain is their hope, and their

labour without fruit, because they can carry away nothing of all their labour." This is seen every day, by the dead, who, be they never so rich bear with them but a winding cloth.

The third manner of men are they that have a liking to do good, but because they do it not in the manner they should do it in, they lose their reward; for when good intent fails in any deed, the reward that should fall to the good work fails. And that may be in four ways; first, for the wickedness of the working; as the offering of Cain, that though he offered to GOD of the fruit that was new, GOD would not look thereon: but to the offering of Abel his brother, GOD looked. Therefore says S. Gregory:—"By the heart's will of him that offers is the gift received of GOD or rejected: and GOD was not pleased with Abel for the offering, but pleased with the offering for Abel, who in all his works

was true and good; but to Cain and to his offering God would not look, for he who made the offering displeased God greatly." And why our offering, or what we do that is in its nature good, displeases God, the prophet says:—"When ye make many prayers, I will not hear: because your hands are full of blood." The second that reaves away a man's reward for his good deed, is vanity, which stirs man to do the good because he would be praised. For vain-glory makes evil of good: as if alms-deed that is good in nature be done for praising, it wins only sin. The third that snatches a reward from a good deed is boasting by him that does the good deed, as the Pharisee did, of whom God said to the folk that stood before Him, "Soothly, this man has lost his reward for all his good deed." Needful it is therefore that a man do what good he can, and do not pride himself thereof in thought or in word;

for he has not the doing of a good deed of himself, nor of his own desiring. The fourth that snatches from a man his reward for a good deed (is) when he does it with the intent to be holden better than others, or to lessen the good deed of others, or to outdo it if he can. Of such, S. Gregory tells a tale in his dialogues: That once on a time the holy Bishop Fortunatus, chased the fiend out of a man in one evening; and the fiend, when he was chased out, put on the likeness of a pilgrim, and went through the city where the Bishop lived, weeping and yelling like a poor wretch, who was anxious for lodging that night, and thus he said; "Lo, what your Bishop, whom ye consider so good, has done to me: he came to the house where I had taken my lodging, and put me out by force: and now like a poor wretch, of lodging am I desirous; over all, I seek lodging, and none will have ruth on me." A man of that city who heard him, took him into his house,

and set him by the fire and eased him, as he wished. When the man had inquired of him of far-off things, as men do to pilgrims, the fiend leaped at the child in the cradle, and wrung its neck in two, and cast it into the fire, and vanished away. Of this S. Gregory speaks and says, "Many deeds seem good, and are not good, because they are not done with a good will. And this man harboured the pilgrim for no pity of him, but because he spake evil of the Bishop, and in order that he" (the man) "should be held better and of more pity than the Bishop." Yet a good deed is lost, if a man covet by it to have of man, riches, or position, or honours or any worldly good. Yet through sin defiling, the good deed is lost; and here-unto accords Holy Writ that says, "who sinneth in one thing, loses many good things," which is, "he that in a deadly thing sins, he loses many goods," save he amend him with shrift, and do penance therefor.

SECOND PART OF THE BOOK.

THE second part of this book teaches man to do his good work with freedom of spirit, in place and in time, as falls to each work: not compelled thereto, nor to do it with anger, nor with a dead heart. For Holy Writ says: "GOD loves a cheerful giver," or GOD loves him who gives Him aught with a glad heart: and certainly the works that turn out to the praise of God, and the health of man's soul, like prayers and holy thoughts, and a clear mind about GOD, and GOD'S deeds; these and others like them will allow of little rest, if they be well (done). Prayer is a sacrifice that greatly pleases GOD, if it be made in the manner it ought to be: therefore GOD asks it of us as

a debt, when He says this :—"God created the peoples for His praise and His glory" ; and "the Sacrifice of praise shall honour Me." And the Apostle, "we ought always to pray and not to faint." Therefore, it behoves man ever to pray and never to fail. He is ever praying, who is doing good. And certainly men of religion are bound to worship God with prayer, and men of Holy Church ; for they live by alms and tenths : for all the world labours to bring them what they need close at hand, so that they may serve God in rest, and with their holy prayers make reconciliation between God and man. And also maidens and widows who have taken the oath of chastity, all these, more than others, are bound to pray. He that will please God with prayer will offer it to God with a free will and loving heart, and will prepare himself before, as Solomon counsels : "Before prayer, prepare thy soul, and be

not as one that tempteth God." He tempts God who yearns not to win that for which he prays: or despairs to speed well therein; and who makes sin and evil life: such a man thinks not he loves. Of such S. Gregory speaks:—"What wonder if tardily our prayers are heard by the Lord, when we tardily or not at all hear the Lord when He commands?" And Isidore:—"He cannot have assured confidence in his prayers who even thus far in the commands of God is slothful, and whom the remembrance of sinful doing delights." Whoever will speed of his prayer, let him do what good he can; flee sin, call his heart from the world, and keep it at home as the Gospel teaches; "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and shut thy door, and pray to thy Father." "Enter," he says, "thy bed," that is, "call thine heart home," and "then fasten thy door"; i.e., "hold thy wits in thee, that

none go out." For it is but folly to pray to God to come to us, poor needy wretches, to give us alms of His dear-worthy grace, and not abide His coming, but turn our back on Him. S. Isidore says that the soul must be cleansed from the stain of sin, and the heart be withdrawn from the provocations of the world, in order that prayer may rise without hindrance to God. For far is that man from God, pray he never so much, whose prayers are mixed with worldly thoughts: therefore says the Psalm "Be still, and see that I am God." This ought to stir us up to pray with great dread and consideration for we speak with Almighty-God, when we are naught but unworthy wretches. For so did Abraham, God's private friend, who said:—"I speak to my Lord which am but dust and ashes." And Isidore says:—"we ought to pray with sighings and tears, and remembrance of our grimly sins, and of the many pains and bitter

we shall endure for them, unless we amend us, and He have pity on us." Also, he who prays shall hope to speed well in that for which he prays; for Christ Himself said, "All things are possible to the believing": therefore we shall pray to God as to our Father in that for which we pray, if we love Him as our Father, and be His children. For He says to all His . . . . He says* "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He shall give it to you." There are six things to know in prayer: first, how a man shall prepare himself before. The second, to whom he shall pray: the third, for whom he shall pray: the fourth, what he shall ask in prayer: the fifth, what hinders prayer: the sixth, what might and virtue prayer is of. The first is written already, and begins at, "Before prayer, prepare thy soul," and lasts as far as here.

* The MS. is defective.

The second, to whom shalt thou pray? Soothly, before all others, to God Almighty, as the prophet bids, "Be subject to God and pray to Him." And in the Gospel, God says, "Thou shalt adore the Lord thy God." Saints we honour and pray to, not as givers of goodness, but as God's friends to help us to win from Him that we pray after. Therefore, let us believe in God with all our heart, and certain hope, and perfect charity: our Lord God is to be loved. The third, for whom shall men pray? A great clerk says, "Every Christian man is a living member of Holy Church, therefore is he bound to pray for all, but specially for men of Holy Church, as the Pope, Cardinals, Bishops, all who have cure of men's souls: also for our foes and our friends; and all who are in deadly sin, that they, through grace, may rise: for all who are in Purgatory, whom God's mercy awaits; and after, all who have occupations, both

quick and dead. And S. Gregory says that he who prays for all, the sooner shall be heard and sped of his prayer: and S. Ambrose; "If thou prayest for all, all will pray for thee." And S. Jerome; "Necessity binds a man to pray for himself, but charity of brotherhood stirs him to pray for all: and charity, more than necessity, stirs GOD to hear." The fourth, what shall men ask in prayer? Certainly, grace in this life, and endless joy in the other; for so GOD teaches us and says: "Seek first the kingdom of GOD and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you." GOD is debtor to those who are righteous, to find them what they need of earthly goods: for righteousness makes men GOD'S children, and a father by his nature is bound to find for his children. Earthly goods are not to be asked in prayer, for they have done harm to many, therefore Solomon says "How long, ye fools, will ye

desire those things which are hurtful to you?" Therefore, every man should ask of GOD with fear, that he ask and pray his Lord that if He see that his prayer be necessary and reasonable, that He will fulfil it: and if it be not necessary and reasonable, that He will withdraw it; for what may help and what may harm, the Leech knows better than the sick man. But one of these two shall we trust to have through prayer; either, that we pray for, or that which is better for us. The fifth, what hinders our prayer from being heard by God? Six things: the first is the sin of him who prays; as GOD says through the prophet, "when ye make many prayers, I will not hear; because your hands are full of blood." And David: "If I have looked upon iniquity with my heart, the Lord will not hear." And the prophet; "Our sins have hid His face from us." And the Gospel: "Because we know GOD does not

hear Sinners." The second is the unworthiness of that for which men pray, and that GOD, through the prophet, forbids them to pray for: "Pray not for this people, neither lift up (praise) nor prayer for them; for I will not hear." It tells in the life of the holy Fathers that one who was bound in sin came to the holy Abbot, S. Anthony, and said, "holy Father, have mercy on me and pray for me:" to whom the holy Abbot said; "I will have no mercy on thee, unless thou helpest thyself and leavest thy sin." The third is foul and idle thoughts, that hinder us from thinking on our prayers. Of such false prayers, Gods says through His prophet. "This people honour ME with their lips, but their heart is far from ME." It is great wickedness of us unworthy wretches that when we speak with prayer to Almighty GOD, we also unwittingly hearken not to what we say. Soothly, great displeasure we do to

God when we pray Him to hear our prayer, and we will not hear it ourselves: but it is worse to waste our time in foul and idle thoughts. Abraham, when he made a sacrifice to God, fowls of the air lighted thereon, and would have defiled it; and he cleared those birds away, so that none durst come nigh it, till all the time were passed, and the sacrifice made. Let us do so with these flying thoughts, which defile the sacrifice of our prayer. This sacrifice is agreeable to God, when it comes from a clean and loving heart. God bids: "send prayer to Me, and I shall send grace to thee; and whatso thou dost for Me, I forget it not." The fourth, that hinders our prayer from being heard, is hardness of heart; and that is in two manners; first hardness of heart against the poor; and thereof the prophet says "who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor, he may call and I will not hear him." The

other is the hardness of those who will not forgive to those who have misdone them: to such, Solomon says:—"Forgive thy neighbour who has injured thee while he prays to thee, and thy sins shall be forgiven." And the Gospel says: "As thou standest praying, forgive if thou hast aught against any, and your Father which is in heaven will forgive your sins." The fifth, that hinders our prayer from being heard, is little yearning after the things that men pray for: and S. Augustine says: "God stores this up for thee, that with thy whole heart it may be desired; "for He will not to give to Thee hastily, that so thou mayst learn great things greatly to desire." And S. Gregory says: "if with our mouth we pray after the bliss of heaven, and do not yearn for it in our heart, we are crying still." The sixth, that hinders our prayer; is foul and idle speech, that we fill our lips with; for if thou givest

a great lord drink in a slutty cup, were the drink never so good, he would feel disgust therewith, and bid throw it away, were his thirst never so sore: so GOD does with a prayer that comes from a foul mouth; He esteems it not, but turns therefrom. Therefore says S. Gregory: "The more our lips are defiled with foolish talking, so much the less are they heard by GOD in prayer." The sixth, what might and virtue prayer is of. Men who were before this age, who kept themselves in soothfastness, and spoke nothing idle, won from GOD what they prayed for: and that was shewn to a holy hermit Florentius, who dwelt in a wilderness unknown of men. So much vermin was there about this hermitage, that none durst come thither by a long way. A deacon was in that land, who heard of this hermit, and he came at the last to the place where this hermit was dwelling; but he saw so much

vermin about that he durst not come near: but cried out for help in fear. The holy man came out to know who it was that cried; and he saw a man standing there, and inquired what he would have. And the deacon said; "holy Father, I have sought thee from far, and now I have found thee, I should have joy enough if I might come to thee, but I cannot for these venomous beasts that are here so many." When the holy man heard this, he fell down on his knees, and prayed God that He would destroy those worms: and all soon a grisly storm arose with a thunder, and slew all the worms. Then said the hermit to our Lord; "Lord, these beasts lie here so thickly, that I cannot come to him nor he to me, save we be poisoned by them. Lo, Lord, they lie here dead, but who shall lift them away?" At his word, many birds came, and carried them all clean away. Hereof speaks S. Gregory:—"Because God's

servants withdraw themselves from the world and its works, uselessly they cannot speak: so they bind them to silence that they dare say no word save it be teaching others or praising GOD: and therefore, when they ask GOD aught, He grants it at once." But we, woful wretches, who deal with the world, that chatter all the day like magpies; now lie, now twist, now speak evil, now quarrel, now backbite, now swear great oaths, these defile our prayer and hinder it, that it is not heard; for our mouth is as far from praying GOD, as it is near the world with idle speech." Prayer is so mightful if it have its right, that it masters the fiend, and hinders him from doing his will. For so it did the fiend whom Julian the Emperor commanded to go to the other side of the world to bring him tidings how it was there. When he had flown ten days' journey thitherward, he came over the place that Publius the hermit dwelled

in, who was praying at that time. And his prayer overtook the fiend, and held him there fast fully ten days—for all that time, the hermit was in prayer: and when he ceased, the fiend turned back, for he could no further go, since prayer hindered him.

When thou hast gathered home thine heart and its wits, and hast destroyed the things that might hinder thee from praying, and won to that devotion which GOD sends to thee through His dear-worthy grace, quickly rise from thy bed at the bell-ringing: and if no bell be there, let the cock be thy bell: if there be neither cock nor bell, let GOD's love wake thee, for that most pleases GOD. And zeal, rooted in love, wakens before both cock and bell, and has washed her face with sweet love-tears; and her soul within has joy in GOD with devotion, and liking, and bidding Him good-morning, and with other heavenly gladness which GOD sends to His

lovers. Blessed are they above others whom GOD wakens, for they have many joys while others sleep, for they find that gladness before them, rise they never so soon; for GOD Himself thus says: "he that early wakens to ME, he shall find ME to speak with him, and shall rejoice himself in ME, and have ME at his will." Be then a waker, and rise quickly, and thank heartily thy Lord GOD, for the rest thou hast had, and for the care of angels. Since a knight has great liking to be called to come and speak with the king, when he knows it is for his great profit: with greater reason, ought GOD's knight, that is every Christian man, to be ready at the calling of his Lord, Who calls him for his great profit, and for nothing else. Soberly, rise thou with a good cheer, and think that thou hearest GOD call thee with these words: "Arise My love, My fair one, and come and shew Me thy face: I yearn that the voice of thy

prayer may ring in Mine ears." Think in thy rising, how that night many men perished in life, and some in soul, and some in body and soul: some burned, some drowned, some suddenly dead without repentance or shrift, and their souls drawn by fiends to hell; some fallen into deadly sin, as lust, gluttony, theft, envy, manslaughter, and other several sins. And from all these perils, thy good God hath delivered thee, of His goodness not of thy desert. What hast thou done to God that He should care for thee so, and suffer so many others to be lost? and peradventure thou hast done worse than they have done. If thou lookest well at what God has done for thee though thou hast not served Him, thou mayst find that God is as busy to do thee profit as if He had naught else to do, and as if He had forgotten this whole world, and thought only on thee. When thou hast this thought, lift

up thine heart to God and say :—" I thank Thee, dear-worthy Lord, with all my heart, Who hast thus cared this night for me, a so unworthy wretch, and hast suffered me that with life and health I thus abide this day. I thank Thee, Lord, for this great good, and many others that Thou hast done to me, a so unkind and unworthy wretch, more than all others : that Thou shewest me such kindness against my evil deeds." And put thyself and all thy friends in God's hands, and say thus : " Into Thy dear-worthy hands, my Lord, I yield my soul and body, and all my friends, kindred and stranger : and all who have done me good bodily or ghostly, and all who have received Christianity : that Thou, for the love of Thy Mother, that dear-worthy Maiden, and the beseeching of Thy Saints defend us this day or this night from all perils of body and soul, and from all deadly sins, from tempta-

tion of the devil, and sudden death, and from the pains of hell, and make us dread them. Do Thou hallow our hearts with grace of Thy Holy Ghost, and make us, whatsoever we do here, do Thy will, that we never separate from Thee, dear Lord. Amen." When thou hast done, go to the Church or Oratory: and if thou canst win to none, make thy chamber thy Church. In the church is most devotion to pray, for then is God on the altar to hear those that to Him pray, and grant them what they ask or what is better: and in presence of Saints, and in worship of churches that are hallowed, protection of angels who are there to serve their Lord and thee—for their office is to receive thy prayer, and bear it to God, and bring thee grace from Him, as S. Bernard says: "Rise then quickly, at God's call, and put all heaviness from thee, and answer thy Lord with the words which Samuel said to God

Who called him in the night: 'Speak Lord, for Thy servant heareth.'"

For eight things we ought to wake and ever be doing good: this short life: the strait way we have to go: our good deeds that are so few: our sins that are so many: death that we are sure of and wot not when: the strait and so hard doom of Doom's-day, for every idle thought shall be shewed there, then shall every foul word and sinful work be greatly pressed, for GOD says "For every careless word," etc.: and S. Anselm, "what wilt thou do in that day when all the time expended is required of thee; how it has been laid out by thee, even to the minutest thought." The seventh thing is the strong pain of hell: the eighth, is the joy of heaven. After thine uprising, pray for the souls that are in pain of Purgatory, and think that thou hearest them cry on thee the words of Job: "Have mercy on me, have mercy on me, my

friends, for the hand of God is laid upon me," and help them with *De Profundis*, and *Absolve*. After, greet our Lady, with *Salve Regina*, on thy knees. Go then to the Church, and bid thy vain thoughts and business of the world keep outside thereof: and at thine incoming, say to thy soul, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord, and thou shalt hear His Voice, and behold His temple." Holy Church is the entrance and gate of Heaven. After, fall down before the Cross, and honour Him because He was slain on the Cross, and say "We adore Thee, O Christ, and bless Thee, because by Thy holy Cross Thou didst redeem the world." And then before thou uprisest, have in thy mind how hotly His love burned, That died for thee on the Cross. After, begin thy matins, but first cross thy lips and say "O Lord, open my lips": i.e., "Lord, open my lips that all night have been shut from praising

Thee, and I cannot open them, except Thou help me." And then say, DEUS *in adjutorium*, with these words, pour out thine heart before GOD and say; "Lord, as my Doom's-Man, before Thee I stand: do Thou avenge me of my foes, which hinder me from serving Thee, and they assail me keenly so that I be soon overcome unless Thou dost help me." And at *Gloria Patri*, bow down and say with thine heart, "Lord, of Thy blessing, I beseech Thee." Turn thee to the angels who stand about to thy comfort and help, and as thy wardens to keep thee from thy foes, and thus say to them *Venite exultemus, Domino*. Afterwards, cast thine eye on somewhat, and keep it there while thou makest thy prayers, for this helps much to the stabling of thine heart; and paint there, thy Lord, as He was on the cross; think on His feet and hands that were nailed to the tree; and on the wide wound in His side,

through the which way is made to thee, to win His heart; thank thy Lord thereof, and love Him therefor: for these, they who thither may win, find treasure of love. Think thou seest His wounds streaming of blood, and falling down on the earth; and fall thou down and lick up that blood sweetly, with tears kissing the earth, with remembrance for that rich treasure, which for thy sins was shed, and say thus with thine heart:—"Why lieth this blood here as if lost, and I perish for thirst? Why drink I not of this rich payment that my Lord gives me to drink and cool my tongue, and hear what GOD says to me: *He who is thirsty, let him come and drink. Thou shalt taste and see how pleasant the Lord is; how sweet, how mild, how merciful.* With such meditations, angels come to thy soul, and GOD is there, and says to His lover:—"What wouldest thou that I should do for thee?" and thou dost answer;

"Lord it is enough for me, a sinful wretch and outcast of Thy people, to praise Thee and love Thee, if I could, for so I well ought." If thou canst win to such thinkings in thy prayers, thou shalt have such joys that it shall be a pain to thee to think of aught else. S. Bernard, for the liking that he had for such stirrings desired that matins-time might last till Dooms-day. Think, when thou standest or kneelest in prayer, that thou seest JESUS Christ come with angels and holy Saints on each side, and angels carrying before Him basketsfull of help which is left from the feasts of Saints who dwell with GOD in heaven: that GOD bade them gather up to help the poor with, that naught might be lost. This help is meat to us poor wretches, who would perish in default of it, unless GOD had pity on us. Think thou hearest GOD cry: "Whoso has need of meat, put forth thine hand, and have." And bow thou

with thine head to God, and lament thy poverty to Him and say "There is no bread in mine house"; and also say, "Lord, so long meatless have I been, that I die of hunger save Thou takest pity on me; and naught can hold my life in me, save meat that Thou givest." Stir thyself up with such recollections, and by others that may kindle thy devotion and raise it to Him, even until thou thinkest thou hearest Him say to thee, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." And then, through God's grace, shalt thou feel something of that heavenly food that feeds all Hallows, that thou mayest with liking sing the Maiden's Song, that is God's Mother's, *Magnificat anima mea dominum et exultavit spiritus meus in DEO salutari meo.* When God, through His grace, sends thee such likings, turn thou kindly to the angels who stand before thee, and to them say: "I pray you as my keepers

whom GOD has sent to me, that ye thank your good Lord for me." And turn thou then to the altar, where GOD truly is, and say, "Truly, O GOD, great is Thy mercy towards me," that is, "Soothly Lord, great is Thy mercy that Thou shewest to me." With such love-stirrings, GOD comes to His lovers: and waits not till the prayer be made, but presses in to the midst, and softens the languishing soul, with a bedewing of heavenly sweetness: and tears and sighings are messengers of GOD's coming. Blessed are they who thus mourn and languish to GOD, for they shall never separate from GOD, but have Him ever at their will.

How GOD comes to His lovers; and how sometimes He departs from them. GOD, when He comes to His lovers gives them to taste how sweet He is; and before they can fully feel, He goes from them, and, as an Eagle, spreads His wings, and rises above them, as

if He said: "Some part mayst thou feel how sweet I am: but if ye will feel this sweetness to the full, fly up after Me, and lift your hearts up to Me, where I am sitting on My Father's right hand, and there ye shall be fulfilled in joy of Me." God comes to His lovers to comfort them; he departs from them so that they should humble themselves, and that they should not over-much pride themselves for the joy that they have of His coming: for if thy spouse were aye with thee, thou wouldest esteem thyself over well and despise others: and if He were aye with thee thou wouldest impute it to nature and not to Grace. Therefore, through His grace, He comes when He will, and to whom He will, and departs when He will: so that His long dwelling makes one not more unworthy; but that after His departing, He be more yearned for and sought with zealous love and sighings and tears. But beware thou, God's

lover, though thy Spouse withdraw Himself from thee for a while, He sees all thy deeds, and thou canst hide nothing from Him: and if He wit thou lovest any but Him, unless it be for love of Him, or if thou makest any love-semblance to other than Him, so soon He departs from thee. Jealous is thy Spouse, delicate, noble and rich; seven times brighter than the sun; in fairness and might all others He surpasses, and what so He wills is done in heaven and earth and hell. If He sees any stain of filth in one who should be His dear, He turns from him soon, for uncleanness can He see none. Therefore, be thou chaste, shame-full, and mild of heart, and with love-longing yearn for Him above all things. And when GOD withdraws this heavenly likeness and sweetness from thee, as sometimes need be in this deadly life, give not thyself to fleshly lusts and likings of the world; but to prayer and meditation, read-

ing of Holy Writ, or honest work. And ever mourn thou after thy love, as a young child who misses his Mother. For he that, after such knowing of God and tasting of His sweetness, turns him back and gives him to sin, he has no defence for his sin against God. An unhappy chance it is and full of care to love the fellowship of God and of His angels and Saints and to serve the fiend and follow his counsel with lusts and likings and works of sin: that heart which was hallowed through the Holy Ghost to be God's temple, that was raised here above his nature to have heavenly likings and joy with God, all soon makes itself loathly and foul with foul thoughts: those ears that heard the words that it is allowable to speak to none, open themselves to hear back-bitings and lyings and other idle speech; those eyes that just now were baptized with tears, open themselves to see vanities: that tongue that just

now spake to God in prayer, all soon with that dirty tongue, forswears, backbites, and speaks foul words. Pray we to God that of His goodness He keep us from these vices. Of God's coming men may know by this that S. Bernard says: "When thou art stirred of man in outer or inner spirit to care for righteousness and stand up for it, to be meek and patient, to love thy brothers in God, to be buxom to thy superiors, to love chastity and cleanness in body and soul, token is it that Almighty God comes to visit thy soul." If thou takest godly chastening from thy friend for thy sin, or words that stir thee to virtues and good ways, this makes way for and token of God's coming. Then if thou puttest from thee slowness and heaviness, and with a love-yearning likest such words; then dear-worthy God thy Lord hastes Him to thee, for the desire that God has to thee; kindles thy desires to have

likings for such words, and makes thee bitterly repent thy sin and amend thy life. For, at His incoming, He wakens the soul, stirs it and softens it, and washes its wounds with wine, and softens them with oil; that is, stirs it to repent bitterly what it has misdone, and softens it with hope of mercy and forgiveness of sins. He rives sin up by the roots, as a gardener does evil weeds, and grafts good trees, and sows good seed, where the weeds grew. So does God, who is called a gardener while He is in man's soul: He rives up sins by the roots, and grafts in that soul virtues and good ways: what was dry He bedews it with grace: what was black and mirk, He makes it white: what was bound, He looses: what was cold, He makes warm with love. By these stirrings, mayst thou know thy Lord is come; by stirring of thy heart, destroying of vices, withdrawing from lusts, amending of life, repenting mis-

deeds, beginning of a new man in God, every day more and more. And by this mayst thou wit, when He goes from thee ; the gladness wanes, slow thou waxest dry and heavy, as a stone ; love cools in thee like a pot that had been welded, and the fire was withdrawn therefrom. But then needs the soul to mourn sorely until He come again. If foul thoughts egg thee on to leave the Lord thy God, say this " Whose is this image and superscription ? " if he says " Caesar's," that is the prince of this world, that is the fiend of hell, say to him, " Go again thou foul fiend with thy false money : bear it again with thee to hell ; for my gates are shut, and my Lord dwells herein, therefore have I no time to deal with thee." Think on that holy greeting that Gabriel made to that maiden, Mary in Nazareth, how joyful she was in body and soul in that time ; through that quieting, with her assent, she was fulfilled of grace, so

that she won might and power, in heaven, and earth, and hell ; and on her hangs all the world's health and restoring of those that fell. Think on the birth of her Child, how she bare Him without sorrow and grief that all other women have naturally in time of birth ; and she clean maiden after. Think when He was born, they laid Him in a crib before an ox and an ass, other cradle had He none. There was none to serve Him with the light of torches as men do before great lords : therefore there came a fire from heaven that lighted the house He was in, and Bethlehem ; and angels came from heaven to sing the child asleep with a merry voice. Think how Three Kings came from far lands through knowing of a star, and offered Him gold, incense and myrrh : think how sweetly the child smiled on them, and with His lovely eyes sweetly looked on them. Think how poorly His Mother was clad when the Kings

kneeled before her : for on her she had but a white smock as the clerks say, more to cover herself with than for shewing of pride. Think how His Mother came with Him to the Temple to make her offering of cleansing, and bowed to fulfil the Law as if they were sinful. Think how the old priest Symeon took the Child in his arms, and blessed GOD : for there, through the stirring of the Holy Ghost, he saw the Saviour of all this world between His hands, and prayed that he might pass out of this world, "for mine eyes have seen Him Who saves the folk." Think of that sorrow His Mother had when she missed Him and sought Him three days, and then found Him among the Masters, hearing and inquiring of points of the Law. Think how He came to be christened of S. John : how the Holy Ghost lighted then on Him in the likeness of a Dove, the Father there with voice recorded that He was His

Son. Think how He hallowed wedlock in the house of the Ruler of the Feast, and there, to show that He was Almighty God changed water into wine. In the wilderness, how he fasted 40 days without meat; how He overcame the fiend that tempted Him with three: with gluttony, and covetousness, and vainglory, and of the wonder men had of His preaching, for all the words He spake to them were full of grace. How He healed the sick, raised the dead, gave sight to the blind, speech to the dumb, health to the leper, with touching of His hands: and many other sicknesses that were in their nature incurable, He healed through the might of His words, for He could do more than Nature. How He was weary of much going; rested Him at the well; and then He bade give Him water to drink for He thirsted sore. Then, open thine heart with sore sighings, and think on the passion and pains that Jesus

Christ suffered, as they are written before on the xviii leaf.*

He may ask grace of GOD, and certainly trust to speed, who here stirs himself up with good works, and with devotion and likings: flavours them so that they may be savoury to his dear Lord. Works of penance, as fasting, waking, hard fighting, forbearing of fleshly lusts, prayers, almsdeed, and other things that we do with devotion and likings in GOD, it behoves that so they be done with a glad heart, and with a freedom of spirit. Devotion is a worthy affection that GOD sends to the heart to gladden it with: but unworthy is he to have this gift, that will make no dwelling-place in his heart for it. We seek with our belief what is above us, but it savours us not, for we are so full of earth that we have

* On the 18th leaf of the MS. containing *Our Daily Work* begins Richard Rolle's *Meditations on the Passion*. A rendering of this is given in Fr. R. H. Benson's *A Book of the Love of JESUS*.

lost our taste. Why do so many men feel the stirrings that the fiend forges, and suffer his enemy so often to overthrow him? I see nothing that does this, save lack of grace. Among all other (things) I trow we grieve God most, because we will not labour to win this grace of God: and God promises His grace to all that will to receive, if that their vessel be clean and empty to receive it in. But S. Bernard says: "The heart that is loaded with covetousness of the world, it can have neither devotion nor liking in God; for soothfastness and vanity, a lasting and a failing thing, a ghostly thing and a bodily cannot be brought together at any time." So worthy a thing is the comfort of God that it will not rest in a breast where other comfort is. So delicious is the liking in Him, that with no other liking can it accord. Whoso yearns after other comfort to glad himself with, witnesses against

himself that he withstands God's grace: unless it be honest comfort betimes that he may thereby glad his nature with, and better serve God. After thou hast spent thy time in prayers, and holy thoughts and good works, in God's holy dread, prepare thyself for food to strengthen thy nature which would else fail. And to this intent shall every Christian man clothe and feed his body; that it may the better serve his Lord, in whatsoever he does. In the morning, thou shalt go to thy meat, with soberness and measure; care for thy self in thy meat-time; and after meat, make thou praising to thy Lord that He has fed thee, and also before meat, and for all the good deeds that He has done to thee. First, or ever thou goest to meat, thou shalt mourn as holy Job did, who thus says, "Before I eat I sigh," because my nature is made weak and feeble for Adam's sin; and every day needs bodily meat to uphold the nature that

else would fail in a little time. And, as it tells in the life of the holy Fathers; Isidore that holy man, when he ate, he wept sore and said, "I am ashamed of myself for I live by beastly meat as other beasts do that have no reason by nature; and I, GOD's reasonable creature, made like to Himself, that should have dwelt in Paradise, and there have been fed with heavenly food." When thou findest delight or savour in meat and drink, think on the heavenly Saints whom all likings pass by, and we be never satisfied till we feel thereof. Men of religion hear lessons of holy men's lives at their meat, so that as the body is fed with bodily food, so the soul be fed with holy words. Man's body is as a burning furnace, and specially in the young; and delicious and hot meats and drinks make that fire to burn hotter: therefore says S. John:—"Plenty in time of youth is double fire." Therefore all that kindles

sin in the flesh is to be fled from. The wise man says, "If thou wilt abate the flame, abate the brands." And S. John; "Flesh-meat and wine are kindling of fleshly stirrings." And S. Austin; "the flesh is as a wild colt, which is to be tamed with bridle and hunger." And Solomon; "Rod and burden fall to the ass," that betokens our flesh. Wisely should a man consider the meat that comes before him, and take of them in such measure that they grieve him not, but that through them, he may serve God better. Therefore S. John bids:— "Ever when thou eatest, ever hunger thou, that after meat thou mayst read and pray and serve God better.

Holy men who have been before us enjoyed strong sharp meat, more to abate hunger than for pleasure. Some lived by grass, some by roots, some by spices and herbs and fruit that the earth bore; and in

whatso they ate they destroyed all taste that might stir them to pleasure. Also, S. Germanus mixed ashes with his bread, that he should feel no pleasure in his meat-time. Other sauce than hunger, they took none. S. Gregory says: "bread made of bran and water, with cold or other simple pottage is good food to the well-taught stomach, with sauce of GOD's love if he have it therewith: without this sauce, no sustenance has savour that man enjoys." Some eat no meat before the night; some only every other day; some fast three days together. Machari fasted all the Lenten-tide, save Sundays, and ate naught but raw leaves. Some take no heed when they eat, nor what they eat, flesh or fish: all tasted alike to them, so that afterwards, they wist not what they ate. Some, when they were set down to meat, and meat was brought before them, they forgot to eat, for so they spent the day and the night in

holy speech, that they thought of naught else, till the undern-tide* of the second day, so that the brethren came to them and asked why they could not eat: and then, for the first time, thought they of meat, and they ate then as they thought good, in GOD'S holy fear. When thou art set to thy meat, make before thee a cross on the board with five crumbs to stir thee up to think on Him who died for thee on the Cross; and think, here lies His head that was crowned with thorns, there His hands, there His feet that were nailed full fast; there was His sweet side that was opened with the spear, from which came both blood and water to heal my dirty wounds. When thou hast so done if thou canst, take part of thy bread and of thy fish, and lay it by itself, and say thus quietly in thine heart, "Lord, what wilt Thou give me for this

* A meat-time between sunrise and noon, or between noon and sunset.

pittance I make to Thee? how many tears, how many love-yearnings and longings after Thee? how many comforts of the Holy Ghost, how many stirrings to good things, how many lookings towards me with Thy lovely eyes? Lord, wilt Thou for this meat that the poor hungry man shall have for Thy sake, give me the love of Thee?" When thou hast eaten what thou thinkest good, thank thy Lord that He hath fed thee. After meat, be thou worthy, and keep thee from much speech and idle games, and hold thy wits inward in fear of God. Seemly it is to man, and pleasing to God, that his bearing be more honourable and temperate after meat than before: that no taking of excess be seen in him, that the flesh may serve the soul better in reading, praying and other ghostly works, that may help to good things. Then Even-song say, with the devotion that God sends thee, in Church or Oratory, or where-

soever thou mayst say it best, away from the noise and throng of the world. After, if thou needest, go sup : and short be thy supper time : so in measure take thou meat and drink that it be no burden nor grievance to thy nature, nor hindrance to serve thy Lord ; or in time of rest reave from thee thy sleep ; or the fiend defile thee with foul temptations in thy sleep, as he often does him who goes to bed with a full stomach. Every man eat, as S. John says, " according as he is strong or old, or according as his body is greater or less, or whole or sick ; take what is needful for sustenance of nature, and not as pleasure asks." After supper, go to the Church or other place, where thou mayst be most at rest, and say thy Compline, for in this time as S. Ambrose saith, " birds in their language praise their Lord, and thank Him after their kind, for the goods He has sent them." Call thou then on thy God and say *Converte nos*

DEUS salutaris noster, as if he said, "Lord, I have been this day hindered by the world, that has greatly hindered me from serving Thee; through temptation of the fiend and of my flesh oft this day have I done amiss; therefore, my Lord, turn me now from the world, and from all that may hinder me from praising Thee with a pure heart and with all my wits, so that they be intent on Thee to work Thy will." And then, say forth thy Compline, and after, other prayers with the devotion that GOD sends thee. And after, before thou goest to bed, hold a chapter with thine heart, and ask it in what things it is better than it was. Hast thou shriven thee of that sin that thou didst then and there? of the words that thou spakest there? of that evil will that was in thee then? of that wrong that thou didst and saidst there to him? of that handling? of that blame? of that foul thought? of that thing left un-

done that thou should'st have done? art thou willing to leave off such vices? What temptations withstood'st thou this day? in what art thou meeker than thou wast? in what more chaste, more sober, more patient, more temperate, more loving thy GOD in thy brother, or more liking in GOD hast thou than thou hadst? Hast left that sin that thou, through habit, fallest into so oft? and other many vices that thou hast done and pleased the fiend with: and grieved thy good GOD, and hast barred thyself against the grace that should help thee. And then, with a repenting of those sins that bite thy conscience, knock on thy breast and say a *Pater noster* with *Ave Maria,* on thy knees, and soon in the morning shrive thee of those sins. And if thou doest thus, I hope the fiend shall be afeared to tempt thee, for thou art under GOD'S ward, whilst thou bearest thee thus. After this reckoning, where-through thy soul

is raised to a blessed hope to the Father of mercy, and thy flesh waxes heavy, go to thy rest: for if thou hinderest thy flesh of its necessity, and work it beyond its might, faintly will it help thee, or hinder thee withal. And or ever thou goest to rest commit thyself and thy friends into God's hands, who for us was nailed to the tree, and beseech Him, for His mercy, that He guard thee from all perils of body and soul, and arm thee with the token of the cross; for where the fiend sees this mark soon he flies. Of this mark, it is written in the life of S. Edmund: that as he went one time alone, a child appeared to him who was wonderfully fair, and said, "Hail, my friend, whom I love in God." S. Edmund was surprised at this greeting, and the child said to him, "knowest thou me not?" And S. Edmund said to the child, "How should I know thee? I never saw thee before." And the child said to him,

"When thou didst learn in school, I sat ever by thy side; and ever since I have been with thee, wheresoever thou hast dwelt; for so my Lord has fastened me to thee, that I might never part from thee, such is my Lord's will. But behold on my forehead, and read what thou seest there." He looked as he told him, and with heavenly letters, these four words, he saw there written, *JESUS Nazarenus Rex iudeorum.* Then said the child, "This is my Lord's name, thou seest thus written. This name I will that thou have in mind, and print it in thy soul, and cross thy front with this name; before thou goest to sleep; and from harassings of the fiend, it shall protect thee that night, and from sudden death, and all who thus by night cross themselves therewith." And when he had spoken these words, he vanished away. Carry some holy thoughts to bed with thee, and say thy prayers, till sleep fall

on thee. To have soft sleep and sweet, a sovereign help is measure and soberness in meat and drink: with recollection of GOD's law and Holy Writ; as GOD says through the prophet, "Keep My law and My counsel, and if thou sleepest thou shalt not be afraid; if thou dost rest thy sleep shall be sweet." And ever, as thou wakenest, lift thine heart to GOD, with some holy thought, and rise and pray to thy Lord that He grant release from pains to the dead, and grace to the living, and life without end. If temptation of lust stir thee in bed, think that thy good Lord hung on the Rood for thee; think on His five wounds that streamed down of blood: think that His bed was the hard knotty tree, and instead of a pillow He had a crown of thorns. And say then, with sore sighing, till thy desire cool, "My dear-worthy Lord hanged on the Rood for me; and I lie in this soft bed, and welter me in sin, like a

foul swine that loves but filth." Rise then quickly, and hold thee with prayers, love-sighings and tears. Of three points beware. The first, that the devotions thou hast through grace stirring, be not known of others: hide them, so far as thou mayest with will and deed for fear of vain glory. The second, that thou thinkest not it is in thy power to have such devotions and stirrings when thou wilt: but only through GOD'S grace when He will send them. The third, that thou thinkest not over-well of thyself for such stirrings; nor thinkest thou art therefore dear to GOD; nor deem another more unworthy who does not as thou dost; but when thou hast done all well, think soothly by thyself, and grant it in words; "It is nothing worth I do, Lord: for I am but a useless thrall." If thou wilt lose no reward, deem none other, but hold thyself most unworthy; for if thou fastest or prayest more than

another, perchance another surpasses thee in meekness, and patience and loving. Therefore think of what thou lackest, and not only of what thou hast. Nevertheless, God wills that thou should'st think on those graces and goods He has done for thee, to stir thee up to know thyself indebted to Him for them, and serve Him and love Him the more; or if thou beest in grief to glad thee with. Sometimes, it falls out that in God's doom, one is better whom men deem evil than some that men deem good. Many are worthy without and unclean within. Some worldly and dissolute, and God's private friends within. And some, in man's sight bear themselves like angels; and in God's sight, they stink as sinful wretches. And some seem sinful to men's doom, and are full dear to God Almighty, for their inward bearing is heavenly in God's bright sight. Therefore, judge we none other save ourselves. And pray we for

ourselves and all others to JESUS Christ, Mary's Son, Who for us was nailed on the Rood, that whoso is bound in deadly sin, He loose them; and they who are in good life, that He grant them end therein.

Two messengers are come to thee to bring thee tidings. The one is called Fear, who comes from hell to warn thee of thy danger: the other is called Hope that comes from Heaven to tell thee of bliss thou shalt have if thou doest well. Fear says he saw so many betortured in hell, that if all the wits of men were in one, he could not tell them: of gluttons, unchaste, robbers, thieves, rich men with their servants who harmed the poor: judges who would not give judgment except for reward: treasurers who by subtilty maintained injustice: deemsters who condemned loyal men and delivered stark thieves; workmen who worked dishonestly and took full hire; tillers of the soil who

tilled badly; prelates, with the care of men's souls, who neither punished nor taught them; of all sorts of men who have wrongly wrought; then I saw that every one bought it bitterly. For there I saw want of all good, and plenty of pain and sorrow; as hot fire burning ever, brimstone stinking: grisly devils like dragons gaping ever; hunger and thirst for ever lasting, adders and toads gnawing on the sinful. Such sorrow and yelling and gnashing of teeth, I heard there, that nearly, for fear, I lost my wits. Such mirkness there was, that I could grip it; and so bitter was the smoke that it made the woe-ful wretches shed glowing tears; and bitterly I heard them ban the day when they were born. Now, they long to die, and cannot. Death, which, sometime they hated, were liefer to them now than all the good of this world. And therefore I warn thee that thou amend thee of thy sins with

shrift and penance, and have a steadfast will to leave them for ever: a seat I saw made for thee in hell of burning fire, where devils should pain thee ever unendingly.

That other messenger, who is called Hope says he is come from Heaven to tell thee of that untellable great joy that rules GOD'S friends; "to tell thereof as it is may no earthly man speak though his tongue were of steel. For there is a gracious fellowship of all GOD'S friends, orders of angels, and of holy saints, and Almighty GOD above, Who gladdens them all. Of all goodness, I saw plenty; beauty and riches that last for ever; honour and power that never shall fail; wisdom and love and everlasting joy. Then I heard melody and song of bright angels. So worthy is that joy and so great withal, that whoso might taste of it a blessed drop, he should be so ravished in liking of GOD, and such yearning he should have to win thither,

that all joys of the world were pain to him. With so great a love he should be overtaken in yearning to win to that bliss, that by a hundred times it should more stir him to love virtue and flee sin than any fear he might have of the pain of hell. And I tell thee for sooth, if thou wilt leave sin, and do GOD'S bidding, and love Him as thou oughtest, a rich and a fair seat GOD has made for thee wherein thou shalt dwell with Him unendingly.

THIRD PART OF THE BOOK.

THE third and the last part of this book teaches a man to bear himself, wheresoever he comes, and whatsoever he does: that it be to the praise of God, and an example of good to all who see him: for thus the Apostle counsels: "Let everything be done honestly and in order"; that is "all that ye do, look ye do it honestly and orderly." Then at the first, let every lover of God see that ye yearn not to mingle with the world, that hinders and deceives all who deal with it, and hinders them from the many good deeds they might do. And the man who will nowhere rest but aye rake about; their eyes see many things, that the eye sends to the heart, and such come not out easily when they

are once imprinted. S. Bernard complains of the harms that he felt in the world whilst he was therein, and says "the world surrounded me and weighed me down": that is "The world has besieged me on every side; and through the gates of my five wits it shot at me and wounded me full sore; and through the wounds, death presses in, to slay my sorry soul. Mine eyes look, and my thought changes and kindles me in sin. Mine ears hear and my heart bows me thereto. I smell with my nose, and it pleases my thoughts. With my mouth I speak, and in my speech I please or beguile others: and with a little over-soft feeling, lust kindles in my flesh; and the fiend, my foe, whom I cannot see, stands ever against me with his bow bent." Therefore, if necessity make man to go into this world, where are so many stirrings to sin, with great fear shall he go, as into a battle to fight his foes. It needs

he be well armed against the arrows of his foe, that severely shoots at him; and the more may he dread him because he cannot see him: with foot-traps and snares is the way set full. Therefore, let him who shall go forth, arm him with GOD'S holy fear. GOD warned His disciples to be wary in the world when He said thus: "Soothly the world shall withstand you with temptations." Therefore, if thou must go out, for thine own profit or that of others, colour not thy going with any false hue, to feign for thyself an occasion to dally with the world, for pleasure or command, or to be known with praise before others. . . . .

And therefore they make a show with words and feign as they can, to be holden holy of all who see them, that give themselves to dalliance with the world, more than needs, as to buying, selling or quarrelling about earthly things. And all their outward bear-

ing so accords with the world that David says: "They have mixed themselves with the peoples; they partake of their works": that is, they mingle them with the folk of the world, who have no knowledge of God, and such works as they see them do, such works they do. Therefore, when thou needest to go forth, cross thyself with the holy name of Jesus, Mary's Son, who died on the Rood for thee, for then thou art more secure, whithersoever thou goest, as S. Austin said to his brother, when they went forth. And S. John says: "Whitherso thou goest, and whatsoever thou doest, thy forehead and thy breast mark thou with the cross; for there is no other mark the fiend so greatly dreads." See that thine outer-clothing be not over-loathsome, nor over-curious, in shape nor in hue. Keep thy limbs to their business, to which they were made, and do not cast thine eyes about like a child; flourish not

thine hands, and leap not with thy feet. When the heart of man is out of ward, the limbs sometimes fail in their office. And, as thou orderest thine outward bearing when thou goest forth, also look thou that thou beest devout within, and specially in praying to and praising the Lord. If in going out, thou canst not rest in saying thy prayers, go the softlier. Many things hinder thee in toiling to pray; weariness of limbs; men thou meetest who speak to thee; then thy five wits fleet out of ward, and then the devotion of him who prays, cools. When walking thou hast said thy prayers that thou art bound to say, lift up thy heart to GOD, and pray to Him in thy thoughts in a blessed recollection: think on the good things GOD has done for thee, and shall do if thou truly servest Him: think on His biddings and do them indeed according to thy might, for so GOD bids thee when He thus says:—"The words which I command thee shall be in

thine heart, and thou shalt relate them to thy sons: and thou shall meditate on them, sitting in thine house, and walking on thy journey, sleeping and arising." Or in working, tell fair tales to thy fellows, or something from Holy Writ that may soften your way, or glad you in GOD. And sometimes say the Seven Psalms for the quick and the dead, that GOD give grace to the quick and rest to the dead. When thou comest to the town to ease thy body, seek where thou mayst most worthily dwell for thy condition and in most peace: and where thou mayst most profit to thyself and others. Let flesh-lust and vanity entice thee to no place: but inquire where any is who most loves GOD, and thither draw thou. Seek not where thou mayst be fed best, for there peradventure are many stirrings to sin. Harbour thee with no woman unless thou knowest good of them for a long time. When thou art come

to the house thou shalt rest in, hold thy wits inward in God's holy fear; so that thine outer bearing be so ruled with grace that thou mayst stir to good all whom thou seest, and through God's grace destroy mirkness of sin, and so fulfil God's teaching, who says thus, "So let your light shine before men, that they seeing your good works may glorify your Father Who is in heaven." And S. Gregory says: "Neither is it greatly praiseworthy to be good with the good, but to be good with the evil; for even as it is of more heinous guilt not to be good among the good, so is it of unwearied honour to have stood for the good among the evil."

Keep well thine eyes when thou art come to harbour, from all things that may kindle sin and make thine eyes forward, as Job did, who said "I make a covenant with mine eyes lest I should think upon a maid." After sight, comes thought, and thereafter

deed, and therefore said the prophet Jeremiah, "Mine eye hath laid waste my soul." When so holy a prophet lamented him of his eyesight, sorely may another complain who oft sins therewith. Augustine: "Shameless eye is the messenger of shameless heart." Gregory: "It is not lawful to look after that which it is not lawful to desire." David: "Turn away mine eyes that they may not see vanity." Look also that thou hearest nothing that may stir thee to sin, as unclean words, backbiting, false judgments, great oaths, controversy, striving and other such vices. Also at thy meat, bear thyself orderly, and hold thee in measure, and seek after no dainties, but be pleased with common meats. Consider in speaking, to whom, what, when, how, of whom, and where: and have thyself so orderly that thou beest not like other worldly men, but fulfil the Apostle's words; "Be not conformed to this world, because your conversation is in heaven."

Though our body be in this world as a clot of earth, it is needful that our spirit which was bought with the dear-worthy blood of God Almighty be with mind and will in heaven, not soil itself here with sin, as swine do in a ditch. And whatsoever thou doest, and wheresoever thou comest, do as the Apostle teaches: "Shew thyself to all men as an example of good works," for through a good example God is worshipped and praised, men are helped and taught and strengthened in their belief. Bear thee so that men who dwell with you may say of you as was said of the Apostles Paul and Barnabas, "The gods are made like men, and have come down to us." *DEO gracias.*

On Grace.

On Grace.

THREE degrees of grace there are. The first GOD gives to all creatures, to uphold them with; and this is called GOD'S help freely given to all creatures; and without this gift of grace, creatures cannot do, nor last in their kind; for as water is made hot through fire and becomes cold again if the fire be withdrawn, so, as S. Austin says, "All creatures that are made of naught, so are they worth naught in a little time, unless GOD upholds them with His grace." Therefore says the Apostle "Through the grace of GOD, I am what I am." As if he said, "That I live, that I feel, that I speak or hear or see, and all that I am: all this I have only through

God's grace." The second degree of grace is more special: that God gives freely to every man who is a good and reasonable creature: and this grace stands ever at the gates of our hearts, and knocks on our free-will, and bids it let it in. This, God says that He does: "Behold, I stand at the door knocking," that is, "I stand at the door of thine heart and knock; let Me in." And this grace is given freely to man before he deserves it. Then let every man make himself worthy and ready to receive His gift of the Holy Ghost, Who ever stirs man's free-will to good, and calls it from evil. Two things are needful to the health of man's soul. The first is this grace that I speak of: the second, is man's free-will according thereto. And without these two, no man can do thoroughly what he ought, that should help him to health of his soul; for neither free-will, without this grace stirring,

nor this grace without free-will assenting, can do aught that pleases GOD. Therefore, says S. Austin, "He Who made thee without thee, will not justify thee without thee"; that is, "He Who made thee without thee, will not make thee righteous, save thou helpest thereunto." And though the free-will of man cannot make the grace of GOD in man, nevertheless, let man do what is in him, and prepare himself, that he may be ready and able to receive the grace, when it comes. If thou wert in a mirk house one day, and doors and windows shut: if thou wouldest not let the sun come in, who was to blame if the house were mirk. Also blame none save thyself, if thy grace be less. For S. Anselm says, "Man lacks not this grace, for GOD gives it to him; but he has it not, because he does not make himself ready to receive this grace as he should." GOD is not stingy of His grace, for He has enough thereof;

for though He deal it out never so far, and to so many, He never has the less; for He only wants clean vessels, to put His grace in. Therefore says S. Austin; "God by vast freedom and abundance fills all creatures according to their capacity": that is, "God through His great freedom of His great grace fulfils all creatures according as they are able to receive His grace." If man opened his heart to this grace when God sends it to him, he would shew it in works; for the Apostle, when he had won it, said, "His grace in me was not in vain," that is "the grace that God has given me, is not useless in me"; for he enjoyed it ever in work. We unite with God in His grace, as merchants do together: for God sets His grace against our work; but for His grace and His death, He wills (to have) naught but our praising and thanking, and He wills that man should have all the profit that may arise thereof.

But they try to reave from God, His part, who would be praised of men for good deeds. Against them, God says, "I will not give My glory to another"; that is, "Praising and worship that belong to Me, I will give to no other." Thou shalt understand, that free-will of man is to turn freely to good or ill. Three states there are of man; before sin, after man's sin, and after man is confirmed, that is, after man is departed out of this deadly life, and come to that joy that shall never end. In the first place, before man sinned, was man's will so free, that he could sin or not sin: in his free-will it was, to do good or ill. In the last state, that is confirmed, shall man sin no more. In the second state, in which he may sin, and may not but sin, man's will is free to ill, till it be strengthened with grace: and when grace leads the will, then it is free to work the good. Before man sinned, no hindering had he from doing

good, nor no need to do ill : but now has sin joined with our flesh, and bred what S. Paul calls the "law of the flesh," so that it is master of the flesh, and withstands GOD's law in all that it can. This hinders our will from assenting to good ; and stirs it to ill so that it may not work good, unless grace helps and accustoms him away from sin. Every man before he sins, has a free will to do good or ill, but when he is bound to the fiend, through works of sin, he may through no power of himself come out of his bonds : and then he fares like a ship that in a tempest has lost all that could help it, and is cast from wave to wave whither the tempest drives it. Right so, a man who lacks GOD's grace, because he be fallen into deadly sin, he does not what he would, but aye wavers from hand to hand, at the fiend's will, and unless GOD give him grace to rise out of his sin, he shall be in sin to his life's end, and after, be lost body and

soul, and damned to endless pain. If the folk or the common people choose them a king, and he be confirmed in his kingdom, he be never so ill to them, they can do naught to him, unless it be through some other, who has more power than he : and so, it behoves them suffer, do he them never so much ill. Right so, man before he sins, has a free will to choose whether he will be under GOD or the fiend ; and when, with his will, he chooses to serve the fiend, he cannot after, when he would, come out of his bonds. And therefore, worldly men who are bound in sin say to them who counsel them to amend their lives, " fain would we rise, but we cannot." No, they cannot through might of themselves, but through GOD's grace helping them they can. The third grace is most special ; for it is given only to those who receive the second grace ; and with their free-will fulfil it in deed, and can say as S. Paul

said, "The grace of GOD was not in vain in me." And S. Austin says; "GOD, working with us, fulfils that which He, through grace stirring, began in us." For neither without His helping can we do good to ourselves, nor please Him: as GOD says Himself "without Me, thou canst no nothing." GOD's grace stirring, goes before good will, and stirs it to do the good and leave the ill.

Grace, when it comes first to visit man's soul, wakens him as out of a slumbering and inquires of him with those sharp words: "Where art thou? Whence comest thou? Whither shalt thou?" First he says, "Where art thou?" as if he said, "Bethink thee, unhappy wretch, how foul thou art cast down, and what peril thou art in. For, for thy sin thou art fallen into the enemy's hands, who above all things dost covet to work thy woe; and naught may deliver thee out of the foe's hands, but Almighty GOD, thy good

Lord, Whom thou hast forsaken." After he says: "Whence comest thou?" as if he said, "thou wretch, behold how thou hast wasted thy life in sin; thou comest from the fiend's tavern—Where are all the goods that GOD has given thee to help thee with, and to worship Him? Sorrily hast thou lost them. Thy Lord made thee rich, and thou art become a poor wretch.' After, he inquires, "Whither wendest thou?" "Woeful wretch thou wendest to the woeful doom, that GOD dooms men to; for as thou hast served so shalt thou be judged. So awful shalt thou see GOD there, that thou shalt for fear be out of thy wits; and to the mountains and hills thou shalt cry with a grisly noise, and pray them to fall on thee and hide thee, that thou see Him not. Woeful wretch, thou wendest to hell, if thou dost forth as thou hast begun, where thou shalt find fire so hot and so raging, that all the water in the

sea, though it ran through it, should not slake a spark thereof. And because thou stinkest here to God, for thy foul sin, there thou shalt feel everlasting stink: and because thou lovedst mirkness here, for aye to be in sin, there shalt thou feel such thick mirkness that thou canst grip it; and because here thou didst rest thyself in sin against God's will, there shalt thou shed more tears than there are motes in a sunbeam. Thou shalt suffer pain ever after pain, ever to renew thy woe."

When God's grace has stirred man and wakened him with these three, and has made him to know the peril he is in, then he conceives a terror of God's awful doom: and therethrough, he begins to repent whatever he did ill, and covets to amend himself through God's grace, that stirs him to flee ill and give himself to good: and then comes grace following, to help the goodwill of man to ful-

fil it in deed. For though man have a good will to do the good, through grace before stirring the good will, yet can he not do indeed without GOD'S grace following and helping: and this the Apostle affirms of himself when he says; "But not I, but the grace of GOD in me"; that is, "the good which I do is naught, but GOD'S grace does it with me"; as if he had said, "I can do no good, unless GOD'S grace help me." GOD'S will is also a handmaiden to grace, to work all her will. GOD'S grace, wherever it be, will not be useless, but ever working and growing more and more, to increase thy reward. Therefore do we as the Apostle counsels us, "We exhort you, brethren, that ye receive not the grace of GOD in vain"; that is, "I pray you and bid you, my brothers in GOD, that ye receive not GOD'S grace in vain." He receives GOD'S grace in vain, that enjoys it not in good, when GOD sends it to him;

and therefore perhaps, he shall never after win thereto. Isidore tells of a little fly that is called *Saura*, and this fly betokens grace stirring beforehand. This kind of fly is said to be the enemy of all venomous worms, so that when he sees any worm (going) toward man to sting him when he sleeps in the wilderness; he flies before to the man, and lights upon his face, and bites him a little; and therethrough he wakes before the beast comes to sting him. By this *Saura* is understood grace that God sends to man against the temptations of the fiend, who often stings venomously: it cries unto thee, as the Apostle says; "Awake, thou that sleepest, and rise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." But the unthankful act against this grace, and ruin it: as Virgil did with this little fly that saved him from death. He lay asleep, and an adder came toward him: but this fly Saura flew before, and lighted on

his forehead, and pricked him a little, and therewith he wakened; also the adder came; but this Virgil, in his waking, felt his forehead smart, and smote himself on the face; and so he slew the fly, and so repaid him for his service, who saved his life. Therefore do thou not ruin GOD'S grace when it comes to thee, to warn thee of harm and stir thee to good. Glad ought man to be of GOD'S grace, when GOD sends it to him, and to take care full warily of so rich a gift: for grace is earnest-money of that lasting joy which is to come, as the Apostle says: "the grace of GOD is eternal life"; that is, "GOD'S grace is like a help and way to everlasting life." Therefore, He sets grace before us as the way that leads to everlasting joy: and also a pledge, if we keep it well, to make in us certainty of endless joy; as the Apostle says, "Who gave us His Spirit as a pledge in our bodies," that is "GOD has given us the

Holy Ghost as pledge of endless joy." Hold we then this heavenly pledge; and enjoy we it well in work; for it is well for us in this life, if GOD's grace lead us; and when grace leaves us, we fail of that welfare. Therefore, through help of grace let us destroy in ourselves everything that is against grace, be it less or more, that our reason says is against GOD's will, that is, all that is sin, or may stir to sin: and let us have repentance in our heart, shrift in mouth, and withstanding, with will never to turn again.

An Epistle on Charity.

On Charity.

By what tokens thou shalt know if thou lovest thine enemy: and what example thou shalt take from Christ to love him.

AND if thou beest not stirred against the person by anger or fell outward cheer, and have no privy hate in thine heart for to despise him, or judge him, or for to set him at naught: and the more shame and villany he does to thee in word or in deed, the more pity and compassion thou hast of him as thou wouldest have of a man who was out of his mind, and thou thinkest thou canst not find in thine heart to hate him, for love

is so good in itself, but prayest for him, and helpest him, and desirest his amending, not only with thy mouth as hypocrites do, but with thy affection of love in thine heart, then hast thou perfect charity to thy fellow-Christian. This charity had S. Stephen, perfectly, when he prayed for them who stoned him to death. This charity, Christ counselled to all who would be His perfect followers, when He said thus: "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, pray for those who persecute and calumniate you." And therefore, if thou wilt follow Christ, be like Him in power. Learn to love thine enemies, and sinful men, for all those are thy fellow-Christians. Look and bethink thee how Christ loved Judas, who was both His bodily enemy and a sinful caitiff: how goodly Christ was to him; how benign; how courteous; how humble to him whom He knew to be damnable; and nevertheless,

He chose him for His Apostle, and sent him to preach with the other Apostles; He gave him power to work miracles: He shewed to him the same good cheer in word and deed; also with His precious Body; and preached to him as He did to the other Apostles: He condemned him not openly, nor abused, nor despised him, nor ever spake evil of him: and yet even though He had done all that, He would but have said the truth! And above all, when Judas took Him, He kissed him and called him His friend. All this charity, Christ shewed to Judas whom He knew to be damnable. In no manner of feigning or flattering, but in soothfastness of good love and clean charity. For though it were truth that Judas was unworthy to have any gift of God, or any sign of love, because of his wickedness; nevertheless, it was worthy and reasonable that our Lord should appear as He is.

He is love and goodness, and therefore it belongs to Him to shew love and goodness to all His creatures, as He did to Judas. Follow after, somewhat if thou canst; for though thou beest shut in a house with thy body, nevertheless in thine heart, where the place of love is, thou shalt be able to have part of such a love to thy fellow Christians as I speak of. Whoso deems himself to be a perfect follower of Jesus Christ's teaching and living, as some men deem that they be, inasmuch as one teaches and preaches, and is poor in worldly goods as Christ was, and cannot follow Christ in His love and charity, to love his fellow-Christians, every man, good and ill, friends and foes, without feigning, flattering, despising in heart, angriness and melancholious reproving, soothly, he beguiles himself: the dearer he deems himself to be, the further he is. For Christ said to those who would be His followers, thus:

"This is My commandment, that ye love mutually as I have loved you."

"This is My bidding, that ye love together as I love you, for if ye love as I loved, then are ye My disciples." He that is meek soothfastly, or would be meek, can love his fellow-Christians: and none save he.

Contrition.

RICHARD HERMIT rehearses a . . tale of perfect contrition that the same clerk Cesarius tells. He tells that a scholar at Paris had done full many sins of which he was ashamed to shrive him. At the last, great sorrow of heart overcame his shame, and when he was ready to shrive him to the Prior of the Abbey of S. Victor, so great contrition was in his heart, sighing in his breast, sobbing in his throat that he could not bring one word forth. Then the Prior said to him, "Go and write thy sins." He did so and came again to the Prior, and gave him what he had written, for still he could not shrive himself with his mouth. The Prior saw the sins were so great, that with the

scholar's leave, he shewed them to the Abbot to have his counsel. The Abbot took the writing wherein they were written, and looked thereon. He found nothing written, and said to the Prior, "What can here be read where naught is written?" Then saw the Prior and wondered greatly, and said "Wit ye that his sins were here written, and I read them: but now I see that GOD has seen his contrition and has forgiven him all his sins." This the Abbot and the Prior told the scholar, and he, with great Joy, thanked GOD.

Scraps from the Arundel MS.

SINFUL man look up and see, how ruefully I hung on rood;
And of my penance have pity with sorrowful heart and dreary mood:
All this, man, I suffered for thee: My flesh was riven, all spilt My blood;
Lift up thine heart, call thou on Me, forsake thy sin: have mercy, God.

Think oft with sore heart of thy foul sins,
Think oft of hell-woe, of heaven-kingdom's wins; *
Think of thine own death, of God's death on rood,
The grim doom of Doom's-day have thou oft in mood:
Think how false is this world, and what its reward,
Think what, for His good death, thou owest thy Lord.

Richard Rolle.

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* Wins = joys.

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